

**GUIDELINES**

**FOR**

**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**

**GRADUATE STUDENTS**

**Fall 2019**

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## PREFACE

Welcome to the Penn State Psychology Doctoral Program! Congratulations on your many accomplishments that brought you here. Now that you are beginning a new academic journey with us, these GUIDELINES have been placed in your hands to assist that journey.

**GOAL:** The goal of *GUIDELINES* is to provide both new and continuing graduate students with a relatively brief, yet comprehensive description of departmental policies regarding graduate degree programs in Psychology. Three points are important to note: (1) the department does not have specific policies for all aspects of the program, (2) the program areas may have policies and guidelines that go beyond what is required by the department, and (3) Penn State's Graduate School has a number of specific policies that pertain to ALL graduate programs (see <http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/degreerequirements/degreeReq1>), but these policies are not uniformly described in *GUIDELINES*. In relation to the latter point, the Graduate School Bulletin should be considered as a companion reference to *GUIDELINES*.

**CAVEAT:** It is possible that there are unintentional errors or omissions of important information. Please call them to my attention and I will make the necessary corrections. It is also the case that programmatic decisions and policies of the Psychology faculty may change the information contained herein. When that happens, corrections or changes will be made as necessary and communicated to you.

**CHANGES:** Also note, when changes to the GUIDELINES are made after you are in the program, in most cases you will have the opportunity to proceed under the original Guidelines you came in under or the revised policy.

**CREDITS:** The *GUIDELINES* was originally developed by Hoben Thomas in 1983. Revisions were made by Keith Crnic annually during his tenure as Director of Graduate Studies (1990-1997), followed by Pamela Cole (1997-2000), David Day (2001-2006), Cathleen Moore (2006-2007), Susan Mohammed (2007- 2014), Kristin Buss (2014 – 2016), and Alicia Grandey (2016 - present).

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The graduate program in the Department of Psychology offers five (5) broadly defined areas of study: (a) Clinical (including Adult Clinical and Child Clinical), (b) Cognitive, (c) Developmental, (d) Industrial/Organizational, and (e) Social. Students are admitted for graduate study in one of these five areas, and almost always remain in that area throughout their graduate career.

**FLEXIBILITY OF PROGRAMS:** In general, there are few specific Departmental requirements for the doctoral degree in Psychology that apply across the five major areas of study. This is largely because the faculty has elected to maintain a flexible and individually tailored graduate program. The degree of flexibility, however, varies across areas, as some programs (such as adult-clinical and child-clinical) are highly structured by necessity to ensure accreditation by the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System (PCSAS).

Given the generally flexible approach to individual graduate programs of study, there are sometimes issues or problems which arise for which there is no established departmental policy. When such occurs, it is often best left to be solved on an individual basis. If, however, it becomes clear that the issue is of more general concern, then the faculty will typically move to establish policy to address the concern.

**CRITICALITY OF ADVISOR MATCH:** The individual and flexible nature of the graduate program makes it critical that each student has an advisor from among the faculty in their major area. In most cases, this is the faculty member whose research and general interests are closest to that student's interests. This need not be a long term relationship if it becomes clear that the initial choice was not a good match or as interests diverge over a graduate career. *Changes in advisors happen and are fine.* You must keep the Graduate Staff Assistant informed of any changes in your advisor. Also, although changes occur, it is essential that at all times graduate students have an identified academic advisor throughout their graduate careers and maintain frequent contact with that faculty member. Issues related to individual graduate programs can then be discussed with this advisor and most often solved at that point. In every case, a strong advisor-student relationship will be an asset to timely and successful progress through the graduate program, as well as helpful in planning for the next stage of your career.

### *Terms to Know*

**Director of Graduate Studies (DGS):** This is a psychology faculty member who works with the Graduate Staff Assistant to support the training and development of all Psychology graduate students.

**Thesis or Approved Alternative Research Project:** This is typically an empirical (data-based) study that demonstrates one has the knowledge of psychological principles and scientific methods to proceed to doctoral level work. It can either be officially a Master's Thesis (and result in a Master's degree) or an Approved Alternative research project by your committee.

**Qualifying Exam (Advancement to doctoral candidacy):** Your qualifications for doctoral level work must be determined by your thesis committee and area by an exam. Graduate School bulletin states: "the student has no official status as a doctoral student ... until the examination has been passed." Our "exam" is the oral defense of the master's or approved alternative project.

**Comprehensive Exam:** An evaluation of program knowledge and skills, administered after coursework is complete prior to the dissertation; written and oral components assessed by the doctoral committee.

**ABD:** All-But-Dissertation. Student has completed all coursework, passed the comprehensive exam, and only needs to propose and complete the dissertation to have their Ph.D.

**Dissertation Defense:** Oral presentation of dissertation to committee, after sharing the written document. Passing the defense and completing any requested revisions is necessary prior to receiving the Ph.D.

## II. GRADUATE DEGREE TIMELINE

Although the graduate program is best characterized by its flexibility, there is a general process to be followed and an expectation for timely progress. In most cases, graduate study toward the Ph.D. degree can and should ideally be completed within five years as a full-time student.

The general timeline is briefly outlined below, and may be referred to as a quick reference throughout your graduate studies. These give a sense of how the program unfolds and provide information about what criteria will be used for assessing whether a student is making acceptable progress through the program. *Italics show ideal timeline for milestones.*

### Year 1

- Identify and develop relationship with faculty advisor
- Coursework
  - Begin major area course work (2 in Fall and 2 in Spring typically)
  - Complete stats sequence (PSY507 and 508 typically)
- Satisfy English language requirement in graduate student orientation course (PSY501)
- Complete online portion and three hours of discussion-based Scholarship and Research Integrity (SARI) ethics training (PSY501)
- Begin conducting research (take PSY 600 credits in Fall, 610 credits in Spring).
- Research with advisor
  - Lay out plans for Master's thesis or Approved Alternative
  - Identify and set up committee.
  - Obtain *pre-approval (see area guidelines for procedure) for the project before Year 2*

### Year 2

- Continue course work (3 classes in Fall and 3 in Spring typically).
- Complete remaining two hours of discussion-based SARI ethics training
- Research: Master's Thesis or Approved Alternative (AA)
  - Begin pre-approved project (Fall)
  - Complete project (Spring).
  - Defend thesis to committee (see area guidelines) by *end of year 2*
  - Advance to Candidacy *before starting Year 3*

### Year 3

- Start research with a second faculty member (e.g., Minor Project)
- Complete remaining course work
- Form Doctoral Committee (needed for Comp Exam)
- Prepare for Comprehensive Exam (see area handbooks for specifics)
- Take Comprehensive Exam *by end of year 3*
  - If applicable: Minor project is presented at Comp Exam

### Years 4 - 5

- Propose dissertation - written document and oral meeting *by end of year 4*
- Conduct dissertation research.
- Defend dissertation before committee *by end of year 5*

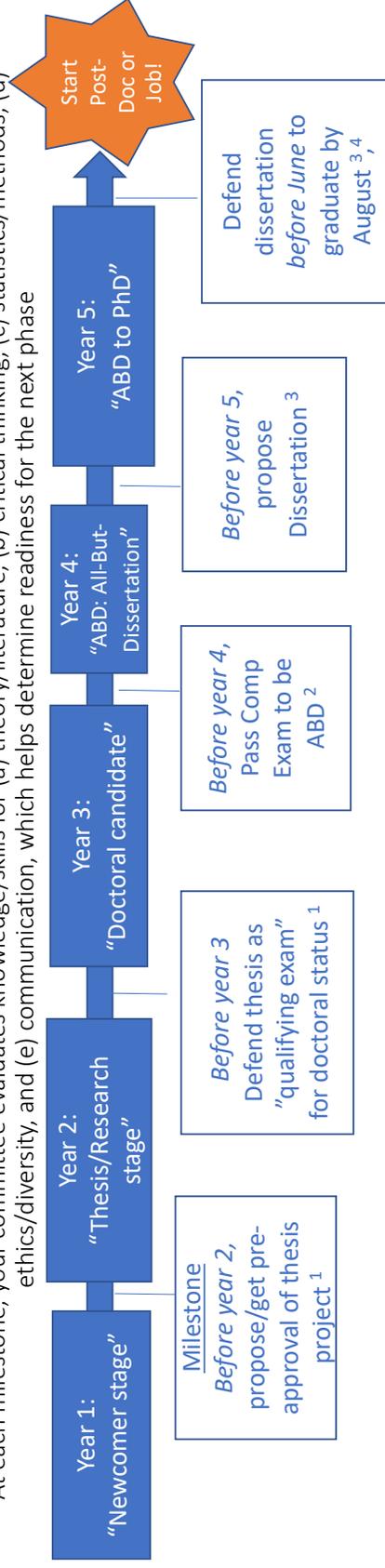
*At the end of your fourth year, if you will be unable to complete your dissertation in five years you must discuss with your advisor at your annual review; and you and your advisor need to provide a written justification to the Director of Graduate Studies in order to maintain funding past year 5.*

## Graduate School and Departmental Timely Progress Expectations\*

(or “How to Graduate in Five Years”)

-You MUST inform Sherri of each milestone 3 weeks prior in order for it to count with the Graduate School – she will find you a room and give you the necessary paperwork.

-At each milestone, your committee evaluates knowledge/skills for (a) theory/literature, (b) critical thinking, (c) statistics/methods, (d) ethics/diversity, and (e) communication, which helps determine readiness for the next phase



\*There are also be area-specific expectations; please see area handbooks

<sup>1</sup> **Students entering with a Masters** also need a committee for “pre-approval” and an oral defense of their thesis/project as their qualifying exam; if completed in the first year they can be a doctoral candidate in year 2 (after 18 credits of coursework).

<sup>2</sup> **Post-Comps/ABD students** have lower PSU tuition, so are easier to fund on grants and help the department financially. Comps must be completed BEFORE the semester starts in order to have this benefit to the next semester’s tuition.

<sup>3</sup> **Clinical students** must *propose* the dissertation prior to September 15 to apply for internship that year and must *defend* the dissertation prior to the internship to avoid paying tuition out-of-pocket for dissertation credits; except international students who must defend post-internship due to DISSA requirements (see Sherri).

<sup>4</sup> **Stipend reduction in 6<sup>th</sup> year** occurs for students who entered with enhanced stipends (e.g., UGF, BW). As per your contract, financial support is guaranteed for five years if making timely progress. If your adviser, area, and DGS agree to a 6<sup>th</sup> year of funding, the stipend reverts to the Grade 12 (basic) level. College/Grad School make exceptions for those who have multi-year externally funded and individual fellowships, e.g., NRSA, NSF GRF.

***Good Standing: Incentives for Timely Progress.*** Students who are making timely progress will be recognized in their annual evaluation letters. Department funding (departmental teaching assistantships, instructor positions, and travel/research awards) is prioritized for those students who are in good standing in the Department and who are making acceptable progress toward the degree. The above time frame is the ideal plan of progress and indicates good standing.

***Poor Standing: Consequences for deviations from Timely Progress.*** Individual situations may involve deviation from that ideal time frame. Deviations greater than a semester will be addressed in the annual evaluation letter, and may require an explicit statement from the student/advisor as to why the deviation occurred and a specific plan for getting back on track. In addition to loss of funding priority, being in poor standing for more than one year without improvement, and failing to make acceptable progress toward a degree, places a student at risk for termination from the program.

**Below are timeline deviations that automatically places students in poor standing; specifically not completing milestones more than a year beyond the ideal timeline:**

- Failure to successfully obtain pre-approval for a Master's thesis or Accepted Alternative by the end of the second year.
- Failure to *defend* a thesis or Accepted Alternative and pass qualifying exam for doctoral work by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year.
- Failure to successfully pass the comprehensive exams by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> year.
- Failure to successfully propose a dissertation by the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> year.
- Failure to follow expectations for academic integrity (classroom) or research integrity
- Failing grade in any course that is part of required program, or receiving grades lower than B+ in multiple courses. The Graduate School Bulletin states: "a cumulative GPA below 3.0 any semester is evidence of failure to maintain satisfactory scholarship."

If you fall into any of these categories, please be sure to discuss your situation with your advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies right away.

***Termination from program.*** On the rare occasion when a student is terminated, it is almost always the student who initiates the termination or a matter of mutual agreement, and even then not necessarily because of poor performance. For some, graduate school is an experience that causes them to rethink their career plans. When faculty advisers initiate this conversation, termination occurs after careful consultation with the student, the area's faculty, and director of graduate studies. Please see here for graduate school policy about termination: <http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-800/gcac-803-procedures-termination-unsatisfactory-scholarship/>

### **Mentoring Best Practices and Opportunities**

***Faculty Advisor:*** Your relationship with your faculty advisor is a long one, and can have its ups and downs. Here are some ideas for how students and faculty can work effectively together.

***Tool kit:*** <http://gradschool.psu.edu/current-students/mentoring/>

***Best Practices:*** <http://gradschool.psu.edu/faculty-and-staff/faculty/recommended-practices/>

***Peer Mentors:*** Your cohort and your more senior peers can be a source of information, norms and emotional support. To encourage additional sources of support outside the area, in Spring of 2018, the department started a peer mentoring program for first year students, with second year+ students volunteering as mentors and meeting with their mentees once a month. This will be discussed in PSY501.

### III. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

It is your responsibility to know these requirements. Although most faculty members have a strong working knowledge of these graduate program requirements, **it is expected that each student will be responsible for the Departmental requirements presented in the *GUIDELINES*** and the Graduate School requirements as presented in the *Graduate Degree Programs Bulletin* (<http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/degree/requirements/degreeReq1>)

If something is unclear to you, do not just rely on peers (who may have come into the program with different GUIDELINES or who may not be following the requirements correctly), and do not just rely on your advisor. Review the GUIDELINES and Bulletin, and when in doubt ask the Area Coordinator, DGS and/or Staff Assistant (Sherri). Below is an overview of the program requirements, followed by more details about each in the sections that follow.

#### *Overview of Program Requirements*

Note that these are departmental requirements. Each area also has its own requirements, to be found in the Appendix of the (online) GUIDELINES or from your area coordinator.

#### **A. COURSEWORK (years 1-3)**

1. Basics: English language and Ethics
2. Statistics
3. Major Area (min. 18 credits, see area guidelines)
4. Breadth in Psychology/Specialization

#### **B. RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS (years 1-3)**

1. Master's Thesis or Approved Alternative
  - a. Qualifying Exam (formerly Advancement to candidacy)
2. Second advisor/Additional Projects/Minor project (year 3-4)

#### **C. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS (year 3 or 4)**

#### **D. DISSERTATION (years 4-5)**

1. Proposal meeting with committee
2. Dissertation defense with committee

### **A. COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS**

Each program area differs in the expected coursework, please see Area guidelines or Advisors. The only specific departmental coursework requirements which apply to all graduate students are the following:

1. **Basics.** In your orientation class your first year (PSY501) you will demonstrate English Proficiency and being your Ethics Training. **These are requirements of the Graduate School at PSU.**

*English Language Requirement.* English proficiency is necessary for participating in seminar discussions, teaching/TA roles and communicating research findings. During the first semester of the first year in the graduate program, each student's writing and speaking skills will be evaluated. The oral as well as written portions of the requirements are graded as either pass or fail by the instructor and another faculty member (if deemed necessary). If the paper or oral presentation are judged as unacceptable, the student will be asked to rewrite and/or re-present it and/or take other recommended remedial actions (e.g., enroll in a technical writing course).

*Scholarship and Research Integrity (SARI) Ethics Training.* Starting with the incoming class of 2009, all graduate students at Penn State are required to complete training in the responsible conduct of research and scholarship. The SARI (Scholarship and Research Integrity) program has two parts:

- a. *Human Subjects Ethical Research training.* In order to conduct any research while at PSU, students must complete an online training in the responsible conduct of research provided by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI). The CITI program can be accessed through the SARI resource portal:  
<https://www.research.psu.edu/training/sari> or directly to <http://citi.psu.edu/>. Students need to complete the course with 80% or higher on the quizzes, as part of the requirements for the 501 graduate orientation course.
- b. *Academic and Research Integrity Training.* Students must engage in an additional 5 hours of discussion-based ethics training. The goal of the workshops is to sensitize students to the ethical dimensions in research and to think about who the relevant stakeholders are and what the consequences of various actions are likely to be. Two hours of discussion will occur in your orientation class (PSY501), on human subject issues and data-related issues. The remaining three hours will occur later in different semesters prior to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. They will cover issues related to the division of responsibility, authorship and scientific credit, and power relations. Students will be notified via e-mail as to when these workshops will be offered.

Missing these departmental SARI ethics training will necessitate having to make up the training in other ways that the student is responsible for organizing with approval from the advisor and DGS.

## **2. Statistics Requirement**

The department has the general requirement that each graduate student, within their first two years (usually in the first year), must have completed a two semester statistics sequence. The Department of Psychology offers a statistics course sequence (PSY507 and PSY508) that is intended for first year graduate students, which fulfills the statistics requirement. In general, all entering students will likely be enrolled in these courses.

*Alternatives to the Departmental Statistics Sequence.* Although it is expected that all new graduate students will take the department's statistics courses, it may not be appropriate for all students (depending upon their background, previous graduate work, or consultation with their advisor about other appropriate work to address the requirement). Other courses may be taken that also meet this requirement with approval from their advisor and Director of Graduate Studies.

**Grade of B or better must be obtained.** If a student receives a C in one of these two courses, the student will be required to re-take the same course or equivalent before this requirement is fulfilled.

## **3. Major Area Requirements**

We have five main areas in Psychology: Clinical (Adult and Child), Cognitive, Developmental, I/O, and Social. The only Departmental requirement for the Major coursework is that **18 credits** must be earned in the student's major area. The major areas within the Department all have a wide range of course offerings which can satisfy the requirements of the "major." Given the flexible nature of the graduate program, the specification of relevant "major" courses is a matter generally left to the student and the student's advisor. Please see APPENDIX or the Area Handbook.

## **4. Breadth Coursework Requirements**

Beyond the major area requirement, the Department also maintains a "breadth" requirement in relation to graduate coursework. The educational goal of the breadth requirement is to assure achievement of breadth of knowledge of psychology outside the area of major specialization. This requirement not only

ensures that students are broadly educated, but also allows the Department to meet the requirements for compliance with the National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology.

Graduate Requirement: **minimum of 12 credits outside the major area**. No more than 6 of these credits can be independent study. The breadth requirement is designed to be flexible in meeting the career goals of students. The following are three options for fulfilling the breadth requirement.

**Option A (Required for Clinical students)** – The APA requires that students in clinical psychology demonstrate breadth of discipline specific knowledge (DSK) through graduate courses in five bases of behavior (biological, cognitive, affective, social, and lifespan human development). See Clinical Manual.

**Option B (Minor Specialization\*)** – Students who are interested in developing a specialization in an area outside the major, but related to their career plans, may take courses that are organized around a particular expertise outside of the major area of study (e.g., outside one’s major area or outside the Psych department). A total of **12 credits** is needed, usually 6 credits of coursework plus 6 credits of independent study with a minor adviser and a **project** of some type (empirical study, theoretical development paper, literature review) must be completed and defended as part of the comprehensive oral exam. See area advisors for examples of how this can be fulfilled.

**\*Note: formal Minor Degrees** are different from this. They are available via other departments (e.g., Statistics Minor) and show up on your degree audit officially. Such a formal Minor is external to Psychology and must follow the credit and research requirements of that department.

**Option C (General)\*\*** – Students must take a minimum of **12 credits** outside the major area that includes one course in each of the Department’s program areas (4 out of the five possible: clinical, cognitive, developmental, I/O, and social). For an I/O student for example, the Breadth option C would be fulfilled by taking a graduate seminar in social, cognitive, clinical, and developmental.

**\*\*Note:** Program areas may provide more specific breadth options for their graduate students – see Area advisor and guidelines. Option C is **NOT** an option for clinical students due to APA accreditation and state licensing requirements.

***Students should be aware that the following rules apply to breadth courses:***

- 1) A grade of B or better must be obtained in those courses selected by the student to fulfill the requirement.
- 2) All of the required courses must have been completed (or be in process) by the time that the comprehensive examination is taken.
- 3) Graduate students transferring from other universities may receive credit for fulfilling the requirements by having taken appropriate courses (for graduate credit) at other universities. Your academic advisor, along with area faculty and the Graduate Staff Assistant, should be consulted in order to determine the merits of courses taken elsewhere and whether such transferred courses are appropriate for receiving credit.

### ***5. Department Specializations: Overview***

In addition to the five major areas (Clinical (Adult and Child), Cognitive, Developmental, I/O, and Social) students may also opt to complete one of the specializations described below (e.g., SCAN). These also typically meet the departmental breadth requirement (see Advisor). There are currently four specializations or Dual-Title degrees:

**Specialization in Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience (SCAN).** The goal of SCAN is to prepare students for neuroscience-related careers. As part of the program, students will be required to complete several courses and participate in neuroscience-related research.

<http://psych.la.psu.edu/graduate/program-areas/cross-cutting-program-initiatives/specialization-in-cognitive-and-affective-neuroscience/specialization-in-neuroscience-graduate-curriculum-requirements>

**Dual Title Degree in Women's Studies.** Penn State is only one of two major universities in the nation to offer a dual title degree in psychology and women's studies.

<http://psych.la.psu.edu/graduate/program-areas/cross-cutting-program-initiatives/dual-degree-programs/psychology-and-womens-studies-1>

**Dual Title Degree in Language Science.** This is a cross-college degree program between the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Health and Human Development. The goal is to allow Psychology graduate students to acquire cross-disciplinary skills in language science, including linguistics, speech and communication sciences, psychology, and cognitive neuroscience.

<http://psych.la.psu.edu/graduate/program-areas/cross-cutting-program-initiatives/dual-degree-programs/language-science>

**Dual Title Degree in Psychology and Neuroscience:** New in 2019, cross-college program. For more details about the requirements please see Appendix B.

## B. RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

The Ph.D. is a research degree, and thus research training and experience are central to the educational mission of the graduate program in Psychology. All students are expected to be engaged in research continuously over their graduate careers, regardless of career goals or the major area of study.

*Protection of Human Subjects Requirements.* All research conducted at Penn State that involves the use of human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the University's Human Subjects Review Committee. Any graduate student conducting research with human subjects must submit an application for human subject's approval. Forms and information on University human subject policy are available on the Web at: <https://www.research.psu.edu/irb>. In addition, Penn State's Office of Research Protections (ORP) requires successful completion of a web-based basic training program for the use of human participants involved in any University research project. This electronic basic training course has been mandated by Federal regulations and is required before approval can be granted for the use of human participants in any University research project. Effective July 1, 2010, training must be completed through the CITI Training Program. The instructions for completing the CITI Training are at the following website: <https://www.research.psu.edu/education/sari/citi>. Feel free to contact the Office for Research Protections with any questions (814) 865-1775.

### 1. Master's Thesis or Accepted Alternative (year 1-2) Requirement

The department requires that each graduate student complete a Master's thesis project *or accepted alternative* (see Area handbook for guidelines). The "*accepted alternative*" (AA) option reflects the department's commitment to flexibility in each student's program. There is not a specifically defined set of criteria that establishes what the AA must be. This is determined with one's advisor and committee as described below, though should demonstrate competence in scientific theories, methods, ethics, and both written and oral communication.

**Critical Timing:** To remain in good standing, the Master's project (or Accepted Alternative) that is used as the Qualifying Exam must be completed BEFORE the end of the second year in the program (4<sup>th</sup> semester). Some situations (i.e., faculty schedules, coursework requirements) may create slight deviations, but students should submit the Qualifying Exam prior to 3rd year of graduate school.

**Requirements prior to Advancement.** The student must have been registered for six PSY600 credits prior to the defense and inform the Graduate Staff Assistant ([sbg4@psu.edu](mailto:sbg4@psu.edu)) of the committee and final defense date. The student is responsible for ensuring that each committee member receives a final draft of the product **at least two weeks prior to the defense.**

**Steps for Thesis and Advancement.** Here are the required steps to complete the Masters or Accepted Alternative Project and evaluated as Qualified for doctoral work. See Area Handbook for specifics.

- **Form Committee** (Year 1): Each student is required to select three (3) faculty members to serve on a committee that will be responsible for evaluating the quality of this research project. The three faculty members chosen for this committee must include **two from the student's major area in Psychology** (research advisor and one other from the area) and **one from an area outside the major** (can be in another area of Psychology or from another department). The committee must be chaired by a faculty member holding a tenured or tenure-track appointment in the Department of Psychology at Penn State. Faculty members not holding such an appointment may serve as co-chair.
- **Project Pre-approval/Thesis Proposal** (prior to Year 2): In consultation with the advisor and other 2 committee members, each student obtains pre-approval for the project. This pre-approval is meant to identify a reasonable type of project and its scope that can be completed in less than 2 years. See area handbooks for specific requirements for the pre-approval process. By the end of their first year, students inform the Graduate Staff Assistant regarding the committee and the pre-approval is obtained.
- **Project Defense.** Please see area handbooks for the specifics on the process, but a written product and an oral defense of the research product should occur in all cases. The committee evaluates the student's pre-approved research product. The committee then makes a *recommendation* about the project itself and about **Qualifying** for Doctoral work to the area and department.

***1a. Qualifying Exam (for advancement to doctoral candidacy) = thesis project defense***

According to the Graduate School, a graduate student is not a *doctoral* student until the student has been evaluated for doctoral work, called the Qualification Exam. In psychology, we use the defense of the thesis research project as the Qualification Exam. The thesis committee can make the following recommendations after the defense of the project:

- (1) The student passes the Qualifying Exam. If (1) occurs and all other requirements are met (see below), after the thesis defense paperwork is filed by the Graduate Staff Assistant the student is a doctoral student in psychology and entitled to those privileges (e.g., additional funds available for travel).
- (2) The student does NOT pass the Qualifying Exam: Note the student's thesis could be accepted, but the student not be deemed qualified for doctoral work. This may still result in a (terminal) Master's degree if those steps are followed (see below).
- (3) The committee recommends a comprehensive review by the major area to determine Qualification. Any committee vote that is not unanimous in support of the student's Qualification for doctoral study in this department should be regarded as a call for a comprehensive review by the student's major area. Qualification for the doctoral degree would then depend upon the

recommendation of the faculty in the student's major area as well as the recommendation of the Master's committee.

*Qualification requirements.* Overall, there are four sets of departmental requirements that must be satisfied before the student may be considered by the faculty for Qualification for doctoral work.

1. Students must complete the Master's degree or Accepted Alternative: Committee review of this project with the oral defense is the Qualifying Examination.
2. Students must complete a minimum of 18 credits of graduate training.
3. For each year in the program, a letter from the advisor and area coordinator must be on file documenting the student's progress toward degree requirements and Advancement.
4. The student must be actively involved in research at Penn State as indicated in the annual review.

Reasons why students may not automatically be Qualified after defense of the Master's Thesis include: 1) thesis committee does not pass the student; 2) there are no end of year evaluation letters on file for the student; 3) any indication in the letters that the student is not making satisfactory progress. Should any of these occur, the DGS will consult with the training area and a planned timeline for Qualifying exam or termination will be determined.

*Residence Requirement.* The Graduate School requires that over the course of some 12 month period, students spend two semesters as a registered full-time student engaged in academic work at the University Park campus. Residence requirements can be met from the time of entry into the graduate program, which should make this an easy requirement to satisfy.

### ***1b. Getting a Master's Degree***

The department only has a *doctoral* program in Psychology; it does not admit students for a terminal Master's degree. Obtaining a Master's degree while in our program is not required by the department; however your area may require it (please see Area Guidelines) or you personally may choose to complete the requirements for the Master's degree. In other words, each student must do a research project (Thesis or AA) to pass the Qualifying Exam, but obtaining a Master's *degree* is not required by the department.

*Graduate School Requirements for the Master's Degree.* Several Graduate School requirements for the Master's degree are worth noting. The Graduate School specifies that a minimum of 30 graduate credits must have been earned, 20 of which must have been earned at Penn State. Also, at least 18 credits must be in the 500 and 600 level series. Finally, **Psychology 600 or 610** must have been taken for 6 credits by or before the student graduates with a Master's degree. Plan carefully to ensure that these requirements are met. Note that in the cases of extenuating circumstances (e.g., health or family issues) the Graduate School has established an 8-year time limit between entry and completion of the Master's degree. The Department, however, expects that your progress will conform to the timing outlined above.

*Master's Thesis Structure.* The structure and content of the thesis is usually a joint student-committee decision. The Master's thesis, however, must be written in accordance with the graduate school's requirements which are detailed in the *Thesis Guide* available online at the Graduate School website <http://gradschool.psu.edu/current-students/etd/>. Do access this Guide and become familiar with it before writing your thesis.

### ***1c. Entering Program with a Master's Degree/Thesis***

Some students enter the graduate program with a Master's degree in hand (or a research equivalent such as a first-authored journal article). These students may apply to have the above requirements waived in lieu of their previous accomplishments, but several steps must still be followed.

A three-person committee must be formed (as described above) to read and evaluate the student's thesis or research article in relation to its acceptability as a Master's thesis or equivalent for this department ("pre-

approval” step), and the student must orally defend (as “defense”) the work. This committee will then complete a form (available from the **Graduate Staff Assistant**) indicating their decision to either (a) accept the previous work as meeting our requirements for an acceptable thesis or research equivalent, (b) accept *with revisions* the previous work as meeting our requirements, or (c) require that the student complete an acceptable thesis or research equivalent as part of their graduate program at Penn State.

**Doctoral candidate status:** The written product and oral defense of the student’s research will be used by the committee as the Qualifying Exam to recommend whether the student is ready for doctoral work. Upon the committee’s recommendation and completion of a minimum of 18 credits of graduate training (see Sherri about which prior courses “count” toward this), and with an annual review on file from the first year, this student can be advanced to “doctoral candidate” after their first year. If a student is requested to complete another research project or Master's thesis as part of their Penn State program, the standard process described in the previous section for completing Master's theses/research equivalents will apply.

## 2. Additional Project: Two or more research advisors

In general, you are expected to be conducting research each year in the program. In order to prevent narrowness of research training, graduate students are required to do research with a second member of the faculty, other than the primary advisor, for at least two semesters.

### Ways to Fulfill this Requirement

- 1) Students may choose to work with two different faculty within the same program area (e.g. Social), whose research interests are sufficiently divergent that the student is exposed to differing research content and methods.
- 2) Students can use the Minor Specialization (Option B in the Breadth requirements above) to fulfill this requirement and work with someone outside the major area
- 3) Students can work with faculty from the Psychology Department. Students with interests in areas outside the boundaries of Psychology Department faculty interests are encouraged to pursue their research interests with appropriate faculty from other departments and colleges. Research completed for a Minor outside the department may be used to satisfy part of this research requirement.

If questions arise as to the appropriateness of the 2nd advisor, these should be addressed with the student's advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies. This research requirement can be met at any time during the student's graduate career, but must be met before the Ph.D. degree is granted.

## C. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION: Year 3

*Timing.* We expect that you have completed your major area coursework by your third year, such that you are ready to proceed to the comprehensive exam. **Students who have not taken their comprehensive exams by the end of the fourth year are behind the ideal and acceptable timeline.**

### 1. Exam Requirements

**Departmental requirements of the exam.** The comprehensive examination is given by and evaluated by the student's doctoral committee, with the intent of judging the student's breadth of knowledge within and scholarly understanding of their major area in Psychology. The Department of Psychology has no formal structure or procedure for the comprehensive exam; instead the structure and procedure are determined by the Major Area. In most cases, the comprehensive exam involves an extensive written component as well as an oral exam attended by the student and each of the committee members.

The written portion of the exam often involves providing empirically-based responses to broadly important conceptual and methodological issues central to the student's major field of study.

The oral portion of the exam often involves further exploration and clarification of issues raised in the written portion of the exam, and may include a discussion of dissertation plans as well. If you did a **Minor Project**, the oral exam is the time to share the findings of that project.

While the above scenario may be typical, it is neither mandatory nor departmental policy for the conduct of the exam. Again, the specifics of the exam are set by the student's doctoral committee and the area requirements. Please see the Area Handbooks or talk to your area advisor for specifics.

### ***Graduate School Requirements for the Comprehensive Exam***

- a) Students should take the comprehensive exam by the time the student has completed 70 graduate credits or prior to the fourth year of graduate study, and within 1 year of the Qualifying Exam. Students entering with a Master's degree should complete the exam within one more year of graduate study.
- b) The Graduate Staff Assistant in Psychology must be informed when the written and oral portions of the exam are scheduled; the Graduate School requires three week prior notification.
- c) The student must be continuously registered as a full-time or part-time student for the semester in which the comprehensive exam is taken and continuous registration is required for all semesters after the comprehensive exam is passed until the Ph.D. dissertation has been accepted by the doctoral committee. (Note this means you cannot register for PSY601 or 611 in the same semester that you pass comps. It must wait until the following semester.) The 601 and 611 courses are special non-credit thesis preparation courses that apply to those students whose sole academic activity is completion of research and writing the dissertation. The 601 designation is for full-time students while 611 designates part-time students, and either involves payment of the special thesis preparation fee rather than regular tuition. More complete information in regard to this requirement may be found in the *Graduate Degree Programs Bulletin*.

## **2. Form Your Doctoral Committee**

Prior to doing the comprehensive exams, a doctoral committee must be formed – this committee will evaluate your comprehensive exam (and minor project, if applicable).

### ***Doctoral Committee Criteria***

A doctoral committee must meet the following criteria:

- a. A minimum of four (4) members, one of which must serve as chair of the committee.
- b. Committee members must all be members of the graduate faculty.
- c. At least two faculty members must be in the candidate's major field.
- d. The chair (or at least one co-chair) must be a graduate faculty member of the doctoral program in which the candidate is enrolled. The committee must be chaired by a faculty member holding a tenured or tenure-track appointment in the Department of Psychology. Graduate faculty members not holding such an appointment may serve as co-chair with a Psychology faculty member.
- e. Outside Member(s)
  - 1) One member must be an "Outside Field Member" who represents a field outside of the students' major field. The purpose of this requirement is to offer a diverse disciplinary perspective.
  - 2) One member must be an "Outside Unit Member" who represents an administrative unit outside of the dissertation advisor's (or both co-chair's) primary appointment unit.
  - 3) The same person can serve as both the outside unit and field member as long as s(he) meets the requirements of both. In psychology, one person usually fulfills both roles.

*For students pursuing a Minor:* The minor area must be represented on the committee, known as the Minor Field Member. This person also serves as the outside unit member as long as s(he) meets the requirements for that role.

*For students pursuing dual title degrees:* A co-chair representing the dual-title field must be appointed to the doctoral committee (counts toward the minimum of 4 members). If the dissertation advisor is a Graduate Faculty member in both the major and dual-title fields, he/she may serve as sole chair. The dual-title representative to the committee may serve as the Outside Unit Member.

***Doctoral Committee Formation Process.*** Using the guidelines above, students should consult with their advisor and prepare a list of members. Students must obtain each faculty member's approval and agreement to serve on their committee. Students must submit to the Graduate Staff Assistant a copy of their completed Degree Checklist and a letter requesting Formation of Doctoral Committee. The Degree Checklist should be turned in to and initialed by the student's advisor, verifying that the student had demonstrated that all of the necessary requirements have been met. The student should include in the document a statement of the student's educational goals as well as a well-reasoned, well-written defense for selecting each particular person as a committee member. Also, the College and Departmental affiliation of that faculty member must be specified. The student and all members of the committee must sign the document. The hope is that the effort will result in careful thought about long-term goals and orientations.

Following receipt of this letter and checklist, the Graduate Staff Assistant will prepare the Doctoral Committee Approval form for the student to collect signatures. The signed Doctoral Committee Approval form must submit to the Graduate Staff Assistant who will then obtain the signature of the DGS. The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) may ask to meet with the student to discuss committee composition. The faculty may also seek clarification of committee choices. When the procedures described above are followed carefully, however, there is rarely any question regarding student's choices for committee membership.

***Changes in Doctoral Committee Membership.*** On occasion, a situation may arise necessitating a change in the doctoral committee after the comprehensive exam is underway or dissertation proposal was approved. If this occurs, the student must communicate with the Graduate Staff Assistant about the changes to be made to the committee and the reasons for those changes. The student must inform all committee members of the change, and obtain their approval of both a change in committee members as well as their approval of the proposal as originally voted upon. No difficulties need be anticipated if joint approval by all parties is obtained, as is to be expected. In the case of disagreement among new or old committee members, normal [university procedures](#) exist for resolving the matter. To summarize:

--The faculty member being removed from the committee needs to communicate with the Graduate Staff Assistant indicating their approval of the change. It need not be a formal memo, but it must be in writing.

--The student must write a brief memo and circulate it to all members of their committee, new and old alike, reminding them of their responsibility and stating clearly the intended changes in the composition of the committee intended. Please note that faculty in other departments will not know of our requirement, and thus they need to be informed of it. Please inform the Graduate Staff Assistant of the changes to your committee so h/she can prepare a new Doctoral Committee sheet and you can obtain the appropriate signatures. Once signatures have been obtained on both documents please return to the Graduate Staff Assistant for processing.

### **3. Pass the Comprehensive Exam**

See area guidelines for evaluation criteria of the exam, and possibilities for remediation. Once the committee determines you passed the exam, you are now 'ABD' (all but dissertation).

## **D. DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

Congratulations - You are either proactively getting ready for your dissertation, or you are there already. The dissertation is an independent research project that can seem daunting, but need not be. Maintain a consistent working relationship with your advisor and working schedule to complete the dissertation in the idea five years.

### **The Dissertation Proposal**

A proposal meeting must be held between the student and the doctoral committee members. The written dissertation proposal must be distributed to each committee member **at least two weeks in advance of the proposal meeting**. At the proposal meeting, the student should present the proposal and field questions from the committee members. A proposal form should be obtained from the Graduate Staff Assistant in Room 125A and taken to the meeting, by the student. At that time, the student's committee will indicate either approval or disapproval of the proposal. The student will then begin the dissertation research or make appropriate changes, as necessary. Ongoing contact with each committee member is strongly encouraged.

### **The Dissertation Project**

As you might guess by now, there is no specific departmental policy or criterion which defines an acceptable dissertation. Again, this is a matter to be decided between the student and his or her doctoral committee and major area. In consultation with the committee chair, the student must develop an independent research proposal outlining the dissertation topic. As a general rule, the dissertation should be an original empirical and/or conceptual contribution within a substantive area in Psychology. Traditionally, students work closely with their committee chair in accomplishing their research and writing their dissertation. Numerous drafts of the dissertation are typically necessary, and the chair can provide valuable input. The chair will also try to keep the student on a reasonable schedule to ensure timely completion of the dissertation. The length of time it will take to complete the dissertation depends upon the nature of the research undertaken, and the motivation of the student. Nevertheless, there are few instances in which the entire dissertation process should extend beyond two years (years 4-5).

### **Dissertation Defense**

The date of the examination should be given to the Graduate Staff Assistant **at least three weeks prior** to the oral exam. The present departmental policy has established that the dissertation document must be complete before the examination and delivered to all committee members **at least two weeks** prior to the final oral. Graduate School policy has generally established that both the dissertation committee chair and the student are responsible for assuring the completion of a draft of the thesis and for adequate consultation with members of the thesis committee well in advance of the oral examination. Again, it is critical to stay in touch with your committee members and let them know of your progress or difficulties. The dissertation should be in its final draft, with appropriate notes, bibliography, tables, and so forth at the time of the oral examination. The content and style should be correct (i.e., meeting Graduate School standards) and polished by the time that the final draft of the thesis is delivered to the committee.

Although a final and polished draft is to be delivered to the committee members before the defense, revisions in the dissertation may still be requested by committee members on the basis of the final oral examination. These changes need to be made and submitted to the Graduate School prior to the dates set for graduation (see Graduate Staff Assistant).

## IV. GRADUATE STUDENT FEEDBACK REPORTS

Faculty feedback and evaluation of graduate students must be done at least annually for each student. These are kept on file with the Departmental Graduate Staff Assistant and reviewed by the DGS.

The goal of the evaluations is to closely monitor student's progress and abilities, identify student strengths and weaknesses, and make suggestions or give feedback as appropriate. This reduces ambiguity for the student who may be wondering "how am I doing?". Although students may be apprehensive about evaluation and feedback, there is typically little reason for this. The faculty is supportive and eager for students to be successful. Furthermore, if difficulties have arisen, students usually have more than ample time to rectify earlier faculty concerns.

### Timing

*Mid-year review for First years.* In recent years it has been customary for all major area faculty to evaluate the progress and performance of all new graduate students twice during the first year, both at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters. The primary concerns with first year students are to ensure that they have found (and maintain contact with) an advisor, have appropriately begun coursework, and have begun to establish a research focus in preparation for the master's project.

*Annual review for other students.* Students in more advanced years are discussed by their area yearly in Spring (April-May). The typical concern for any student is with identifying potential trouble spots (e.g., slowness in getting a master's thesis underway, extended delays in completing comprehensive exams or the dissertation, or even difficulties in clinic team performance). Students should receive specific feedback from advisors ideally in May, or at least prior to the following academic year.

### Content

In general, the major issues addressed by the faculty during graduate student evaluation meetings include:

1. Assistantship performance
2. Coursework completion and performance
3. Timely progress: Masters' thesis/Project and Advancement in 2 years, Comp Exam
4. Research (conferences, submitting to publication) and with 2 advisors
5. Applied work (if applicable; usually I/O and Clinical)
6. Service to the area or department (e.g., assisting with recruitment, brown bags)

### Process

**1. Student Input for Annual Review.** Since Spring of 2014, all annual reports and checklists were incorporated into a Qualtrics survey which EVERY GRADUATE STUDENT must be completed to keep track of requirements and progress toward their goals and completion of the doctoral degree. At the end of each academic year (April-May), each student must provide in this Qualtrics Survey the following:

- (1) A brief narrative that relates the student's past and planned activities to career goals as the student understands them at this point. This provides an excellent source of information for the advisor to understand what has been accomplished and what activities are proposed for the coming year and how these all dovetail with getting the best training. A conversation should take place with the student's academic advisor that includes career planning at the appropriate level for the student and integration of those ideas with the training plan (courses, TA assignment requests, research activities, skill development, etc.).
- (2) Completion of the Qualtrics annual report survey which includes updates on research projects (e.g., publications) and timely progress through the program (e.g., defense dates and coursework).

- (3) An updated vita. The vita, or an update noting publications and presentations since the previous vita was provided, should include any honors, awards, publications, and presentations that you have accrued. Our graduate program is well regarded within the University community, and the data you provide us helps us to meet program report requirements and showcase the many accomplishments of our students. Please note that you must have a current vita on file to be eligible for most research and travel funding and awards
- (4) Anything else specifically required by the student's training area (see Area Handbooks or faculty).

**2. Faculty Review.** This information is reviewed by the advisor and area faculty. Toward the end of each year, the major area faculty convenes for the specific purpose of (a) evaluating graduate students, (b) being informed about students' progress, and (c) taking specific actions regarding graduate students.

**3. Advisor Feedback Meeting with Student.** Each students' progress is discussed at the end of year area meeting and the advisor then meets with the student to provide feedback and set goals. Following the student feedback meeting, where the student should see the feedback, every student should receive a letter which summarizes the evaluation of their performance and progress to date. The student signs the letter to show they have discussed the feedback with their advisor.

**4. Submission of letter to Department.** A letter comes from the student's advisor in conjunction with the Area Coordinator. **Letters should be signed by the student, the advisor, and the Area Coordinator** before they are turned into the Graduate Staff Assistant. Related to evaluation of graduate students is the department's need to keep track of the many accomplishments and the timely progress of our students. Frequently we are called on by the Graduate School to produce reports documenting the successes of our graduate program.

The advisor and student is given a copy and a copy is submitted to the Graduate Staff Assistant (125A).

These annual reports and letters are necessary to ensure that all the departmental and Graduate School requirements have been met and the department can indicate to the Graduate School that the student has satisfied all requirements for the degree. The department will not forward graduation or degree materials to the Graduate School without having reviewed progress.

## V. GRADUATE STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

For the first five years, funding (e.g., tuition, fees and stipend) is generally guaranteed to our students, unless the student has not met the timely progress milestones or other criteria are not met as stipulated above. There are several ways such financial support is provided.

Most of our students have funding in the form of a departmental assistantship. These typically involve half-time (20 hours) teaching assistantships (TA) or research assistantships (RA) to faculty in the department. The research assistantships (RA) are at the prerogative of the faculty member. Research assistantship possibilities are not limited to Psychology Department projects. Often, Psychology graduate students are hired by faculty in departments with related interests. Students' major advisors are often the best source of information about such opportunities.

When the number of positions outnumbers the number of students available, faculty within each area must set funding priorities. Although there are not hard and fast rules or specific criteria for prioritizing students for departmental assistantships, there are some general guidelines that are usually applied. If a student is outstanding in class work, does well on a prior assistantships, and is progressing in

a timely manner, then the student will receive a higher priority rank for funding. However, it is expected that advanced students in years five (and beyond) are more able to secure other sources of funding, such as on a grant, teaching in another department, or awards/fellowships. Alternate funding sources should cover full stipend and tuition (but if they do not you will need to secure permission from the DGS and Department Head to take the position).

*Graduate Assistantship Credit Limits.* The credit load depends on the proportion of time you are delegated to an assistantship. Normally, students are on ½ time assistantships which specify 20 hours of assistantship responsibility per week and allows students up to 12 credits of coursework. On rare occasions, students may have ¼ time (10 hours) assistantships, and can take up to 14 credits a semester.

### **A. Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs)**

Teaching assistants play an important role in undergraduate education. Undergraduate students seek out their TAs for help and expertise, and course instructors and educators rely on TAs to construct, maintain, or improve a variety of course components. The assistantship can also be an important part of your educational experience. It can provide opportunities to get a working knowledge of academic life and responsibilities, to stretch or deepen your knowledge, or to get a taste of what it is like to work with undergraduate students.

*Process of Assignments.* Assistantships are assigned by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). About mid-way through each semester, the Graduate Staff Assistant distributes an online survey to all graduate students so you can communicate your interest in a TA. The DGS then assigns students to the courses for the upcoming semester. This is a highly complex process that takes into account students course schedules, preferences and expertise, and that semesters' teaching or research needs, in an attempt to optimize the match between students and funding positions.

*Hours and Timing of Commitments.* Realize that the tasks and time commitments vary greatly from semester to semester and week to week, but that you should not be doing more than 20 hours per week *on average* (10 hours per week for a 10 hour assistantship). If you feel that you are being treated unfairly, discuss your issues and how you might do things more efficiently with the professor directly.

The regular semesters are 16 weeks. TAs are expected to be available to the assigned faculty member throughout the semester, including the week prior to the start of classes and the final examination period to complete grading. Thus, a TAs responsibilities may not exactly coincide with the dates of a graduate student's other responsibilities. For example, *the week before the semester starts*, some instructors/educators like to have your contact information for the course syllabus, appreciate your help checking materials that have been placed on reserve, appreciate your help reviewing online course content, etc. You might have a final exam late on the Friday of finals week and need to help with grading the following Monday. *Please discuss with your instructor before you buy end-of-semester plane tickets.*

*Teaching Assistantship Expectations.* Every semester, faculty are reminded of the importance of discussing with the TA the duties expected, how goals and issues will be communicated, and what is "good performance." As the student, you should ask about such expectations to avoid later misunderstandings. Assistantship duties should be directly related to the teaching and/or research mission of the faculty. Typical tasks and duties include assisting/educating students who missed class because of a legitimate and unavoidable situation, constructing or reviewing quizzes/exams, constructing answer keys, transporting or collating course materials, scheduling and supervising make-up or special-situation exams, grading, creating/maintaining a course grade book, responding to email, and assisting with course technologies. Although our instructors/educators expect similar things from teaching assistants, the tasks, duties, and communication styles of our faculty vary greatly.

*Generally, our instructors expect from teaching assistants:*

- Successful interactions with undergraduate students: TAs should be respectful, approachable, willing to assist, show concern for students' educational progress, and respond to student requests promptly and professionally.
- Successful interactions with instructor/educator: TAs should be respectful, adaptable, demonstrate a willingness to assist, be responsive to requests, make themselves available as requested, demonstrate emotional maturity, take the initiative or seek guidance appropriately, maintain a professional attitude, and respond to requests promptly
- The successful completion of tasks, projects, and other responsibilities (including grading): TAs should strive to complete work timely, accurately, consistently, in an organized fashion, and with attention to detail.

*Clarify specific expectations with the instructor by asking following questions:*

- Do you need me to attend all lectures to perform necessary duties?
- How long and where/how should I store students' work?
- Should I hold office hours and are there times you would prefer?
- When can I make travel end-of-semester travel plans? (see below)
- How do you prefer to communicate (e.g., meetings, e-mails, interactions before and after class)?

**CANVAS account.** All Penn State members can access a CANVAS account. CANVAS is online course management system, where you can see the courses you are enrolled in. As a TA for courses, you should be added to the faculty member's course so that you can help manage attendance and/or grading. You can also request a 'sandbox' to create a course or group. You use your PSU ID (xyz123) and password to access the account <https://lmstools.ais.psu.edu/login/index.html>

**TA and Instructor Feedback.** At the end of the semester, faculty members are asked to submit evaluations of teaching assistants to the department, which are considered in yearly evaluations and can impact future assistantships. In addition, the department also asks TAs to provide an evaluation of their experience working with the faculty member in a confidential online survey. These are aggregated over several semesters and then used to provide feedback to the faculty member. Please note, given the aggregated nature of this feedback, that if you experienced highly problematic or unfair conditions you should discuss these immediately with the instructor or the Director of Graduate Studies.

**Termination from Assistantship.** On rare occasions, problems arise in assistantship assignments or in relationships between faculty and their assigned graduate or teaching assistants. If problems develop, the first step in resolution is for the individual faculty member and the graduate assistant to meet and attempt to reconcile any difficulties. If a satisfactory solution is not reached, the student or faculty person may request a review by the Director of Graduate Studies. The DGS will meet separately with the individual student, the individual faculty member, and collect any other necessary information to adjudicate the matter. The DGS could recommend reconciliatory steps or termination from the assistantship, this decision to be binding upon approval from the Department Head. Graduate students terminated from an assistantship can appeal a decision further by filing a written grievance with the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. Procedures for such an appeal are specified in the appendices of the *Graduate Bulletin*: <http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-800/gcac-804-termination-assistantships-inadequate-performance/>. Students may also lose assistantship guarantees for not making acceptable progress toward the degree (*see Good Standing and Acceptable Progress Toward the Degree*).

## B. Additional Sources of Financial Support

1. **Course/Lab Instructor.** Teaching that goes beyond the typical teaching assistantship may be an option for more advanced students, and can provide important experience for students planning academic careers. There are 3 options:
  - a. *Teaching lab sections of Research Methods* (PSYCH 301W) provides a supervised opportunity for classroom teaching, and is good preparation for independent teaching.
  - b. *Online teaching in the World Campus Psychology program* gives students complete responsibility for teaching a section with prepared syllabi and materials. World Campus instructors provide feedback, do grading, and provide a human presence to online students. This provides experience in grading, providing feedback, and student interaction.
  - c. *Resident instruction* gives students complete responsibility for developing and teaching a classroom course on PSU campus. The responsibility is the same as a faculty member.

**Criteria for teaching.** Students must have defended their master's thesis or equivalent to teach independently in World Campus or resident courses, and must be in good standing. The availability of independent teaching depends on departmental needs and varies by semester. Other factors considered in offering teaching assignments include match of expertise, relevant preparation (e.g., previous TA assignments, Schreyer's teaching certification), prior teaching, and seniority. We make an effort to provide opportunities to as many advanced students as possible, which means that sometimes students who have not yet done independent teaching are prioritized over more senior students who have already had the opportunity for independent teaching.

**Applying to teach:** For teaching PSYCH301W, indicate your interest when you submit your request to the Director of Graduate Studies. Applications for online World Campus and resident teaching are solicited each semester via email from the Associate Head of the department. To maximize the chance of independent teaching, it is best to apply as soon as you have completed your masters/advancement, rather than waiting until the final year, and to be flexible in requesting specific courses and online versus resident teaching. Compensation for these teaching assignments is through standard assistantships during fall and spring semester (20 hours) and on a salary basis for summer sessions.

Opportunities for teaching in other psychology-related departments are sometimes available. This availability is variable and communicated through email or direct contact with qualified students.

## 2. Department Funds for Graduate Student Research and Travel

There are endowment/scholarship and departmental funds that may fund your travel for conference presentations, workshops, and conducting research. Applications are received and processed on a rolling basis by the Director of Graduate Studies and departmental staff. Starting in Fall 2018, each student may request use of these funds ONCE per year, with allocations variable based on criteria (below) to permit all students to have access to this resource.

### Eligibility

- a. First through sixth year graduate student in good standing (7th year students are not eligible except in special cases); *Child Clinical and Developmental students* should submit to the [Child Study Center funds](#) only; *I/O students* should discuss funding options with Practicum instructors first
- b. Be conducting a study or attending a conference/workshop that is approved by a faculty advisor/committee as supporting your development (i.e., thesis/dissertation, national society meeting)
- c. Have not applied to this mechanism for other department funds in this fiscal year, July 1-June 30.
- d. Be in good standing and within a year of ideal timely progress: those more than 2 semesters behind timely progress may not be eligible or will receive less funding unless there are exceptional circumstances, 2+ years behind are not eligible.

## Procedure

You must apply AFTER your conference paper/research proposal is formally approved/accepted; but PRIOR to the travel/research. Click link below for 2019-2020 submission form:

[https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_e1bR2R6Px9G08D3](https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e1bR2R6Px9G08D3)

### 3. External Fellowships and Awards

There are a number of opportunities for Psychology Graduate students to apply for external support during graduate school. These are especially excellent awards to get because they free you up to focus on your research and individual training, while at the same time being a real gems on your vita. The DGS will send an email announcing these opportunities and deadlines. Here are a few examples:

- 1) The National Science Foundation (NSF) has a graduate fellowship, which many first and second year graduate students are eligible to apply for.
- 2) The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has a graduate fellowship mechanism, the F32 or National Research Service Award, that more advanced graduate students are eligible to apply for.
- 3) The American Association for University Women (AAUW) has a dissertation fellowship.
- 4) The American Psychological Association (APA) has a graduate fellowship that is available to members of under-represented minorities. The Department receives information about the annual competition and this information is posted. Application forms are available from APA and applications are made directly to APA.
- 5) There are also programs within Penn State which are designated for support of minority graduate students. As in other cases, relevant information is circulated and posted.

Incentives for applying for grants. The Graduate School and the College of Liberal Arts *offer financial incentive programs* to encourage and reward students for investing the effort needed to apply for prestigious fellowships and awards: <https://la.psu.edu/current-students/graduate-students/student-resources/funding-opportunities/external-funding-incentive-award>

### 4. Other Financial Opportunities & “Overload” beyond 20 hours

- a. *Wage payroll.* Occasionally wage payroll positions are available, which do not provide tuition. The faculty member selects certain students for the position based on their preference.
- b. *Clinic Hours.* Clinical students are sometimes sought to provide additional hours in the Clinic over and above their practicum obligations or their Clinic Assistantship obligations.
- c. *Faculty contracts:* These are similar to research assistantships on grants, but usually have a more applied component to them. An example is the Assessment Center Assistantship in I/O.
- d. *Summer support.* Some students have some summer funding due to their recruitment contract. Otherwise, there is no guaranteed funding in the summer. Graduate students who are supported on an assistantship or a fellowship for both Fall and Spring semesters are eligible to receive up to 9 credits of tuition during the summer session. You will receive an email the beginning of March giving you directions for applying for this summer tuition assistance. There are no TA positions during the summer session. Graduate students who teach in summer session generally do so through Fixed Term contracts. Talk to your advisor about possible summer funding available.

**Overload Policy:** During the school year, if a student accepts an assistantship for 20 hours, Departmental policy prohibits the student from taking on additional regular employment during the regular academic year without the written permission of the Director of Graduate Studies or Department Head. *All extra funding options must also be approved by the DGS and Financial Staff personnel.*

This policy was designed in service of (a) students being able to perform all their roles successfully and (b) fairness in the distribution of awards/funding. It was also designed to be consistent with University policy, which specifies that outside employment, beyond an assistantship, requires departmental approval. Accordingly, we will consider, on a case-by-case basis, requests for permission for a student to accept additional funding beyond that provided by a 20-hour (or half-time) assistantship.

**Overload funding requests are likely to be approved if:**

- the time involved is small (e.g., 3 hours per week for 3 or 4 weeks),
- the work is consistent with or necessary for, and not contrary to the student's training needs,
- the student is in good standing and making good progress,
- and the student's advisor supports the request.

**Overload request examples that are likely to be approved (assuming good standing and advisor support):**

- A clinical student with specific expertise would be paid by the Clinic to see a few clients, due to a long wait list [limited number of hours and high need].
- A student is doing research for a minor project, and the project advisor wishes to pay the student from a grant that is near its end [no additional hours are required beyond what is already being done as part of the student's required training].
- A clinical student has been selected for a paid, part-time externship, which fulfills a need to supervised clinical hours and matches her specific career goals [externship meets training need that must be fulfilled, hours are limited].
- An I/O student is offered payment to help with grading three small assignments in a business school course [limited total hours, special expertise].

To the extent the additional work *involves larger hours, a higher bar must be met* in terms of (a) the case for the work being necessary or beneficial to the student's training and (b) demonstration that the student meets or exceeds timely progress. In part this means the proposed work will not interfere with high quality completion of the student's departmental assistantship assignment, coursework, research and other activities (e.g., clinical work). In addition, the advisor must explicitly endorse the student's proposal.

**Overload examples that would not be approved:**

- A 10 or 20 hour assistantship in addition to a full time fellowship.
- A 10 or 20 hour assistantship, or the wage equivalent, in a different department in addition to an assistantship in psychology.
- Full-time hourly wages for research at the same time as a 20 hour assistantship

## VI. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### *Diversity & Inclusion*

**A. BRIDGE Diversity Alliance:** a diversity action alliance of faculty members and graduate students in the Department of Psychology who are interested in promoting and addressing diversity-related issues within our program community and beyond. <https://psych.la.psu.edu/diversity/bridge-diversity-alliance>

**B. The Affirmative Action Office** responds to complaints of or concerns about prohibited harassment or discrimination on the basis of age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, marital or family status, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, physical or mental disability, gender, perceived gender, gender identity, genetic information or political ideas.

<https://affirmativeaction.psu.edu/welcome/discrimination-complaints/>

**C. International Students:** University resources for international students can be found here: <https://global.psu.edu/students>

### *Wellness and Health*

**D. Paid Leave for Health or Family Reasons.** Generally, as soon as you know that there are personal reasons (i.e., illness, the birth of a child) that you need to leave your assistantship or coursework, please inform the DGS and your advisor. There are short-term (1 week) and long-term paid leaves (up to 6 weeks) that can be arranged to address your needs and the commitments to the department. If you need to take a leave for longer than 6 weeks, please discuss with the DGS. Graduate school policies regarding leave of absences that can be found here: <http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-funding/infoga/paid-leaves/>

**E. Mental health resources:** Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides group and individual counseling, crisis intervention, and psychological and psychiatric evaluations for undergraduate and graduate students as well as prevention and consultation services for the University community. <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling>

**F. Student Support Resources.** See here for links to Human Resources, Lion Pantry (for food insecurity), the Graduate Student Association and more <http://gradschool.psu.edu/current-students/graduate-student-resource-guide/>

### *Campus Support for Performance*

**G. Graduate Writing Center:** <https://gwc.psu.edu/> We are prepared to assist you during any stage of the writing process, regardless of genre, including:

- Thesis/Dissertation Proposals and Chapters
- Graduate Coursework (e.g., lit reviews, lab reports, seminar papers)
- Conference Abstracts & Conference Talks
- Personal Statements & Letters of Application and Interest
- C.V.s and Résumés
- Teaching Philosophies
- Research Article Manuscripts

### **H. Technology and computing facilities**

**Computer support** for the department is provided by several technicians. Although their highest priority is to serve staff and faculty, staff members are also available to work with graduate students. When requesting computer support, requests should be submitted through the Liberal Arts Help Desk (<http://techsupport.la.psu.edu/> or 865-3412). Please keep in mind that IT staff members support approximately 500 computers, so please be patient when waiting for assistance. The department does not provide software or computer instruction, except as available to students working in particular laboratories and as installed on departmental computers. Check with your adviser or other graduate students when choosing software. Many popular packages, as well as hardware, are available at academic discounts through the Microcomputer Order Center in Willard Building.

**Qualtrics Accounts.** All Penn State students have access to a Qualtrics account to do online surveys. You use your PSU ID (xyz123) and password to access the account. <https://pennstate.qualtrics.com>

## APPENDIX A: MAJOR AREA REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Clinical Area Graduate Requirements

*Clinical Psychology.* It should be noted that students in the Clinical Psychology Program (both adult and child) have many specified required courses, and generally less flexibility than students in other areas. This is due to APA accreditation requirements for PhD programs in Clinical Psychology. Clinical students have a number of course options that satisfy specific area requirements, and therefore, consultation with one's advisor remains critical. Specific requirements for clinical students are available in The Clinical Psychology Program Manual of Procedures and Requirements, a separate document available from the Director of Clinical Training that can also be found online in the Clinical Area graduate program webpage under the Psychology Department's main webpage. Irrespective of the more structured program for Clinical, the Departmental requirement of **18 credits** applies to this area as well.

Please note that this list is not comprehensive and is meant as an addendum to the Clinical Manual of Policies and Procedures, which includes the graduate requirements specific to the Ph.D. in clinical psychology.

Breadth Courses (all Clinical students) – The required breadth courses need to be at the 500 level. In the case of a 500 level breadth course taken outside of the department or outside of the recommended courses, the selected course needs to be approved by the graduate advisor and the Clinical Training Committee. Students who wish to do this should submit a request to the Director of Clinical Training, who will then present the request to the Clinical Training Committee.

#### THE MINOR AND BREADTH REQUIREMENTS

The mandatory minor specialization is a requirement of the clinical program.

##### a. CHILD TRACK STUDENTS

For those in the child clinical track, the minor requirement is usually met with a developmental minor. Some students take the Specialization in Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience (SCAN). Fellows in the Training in Educational Science (TIES) must still take the child clinical course sequence (Child Psychopathology, Childhood Assessment, and Childhood Interventions).

The developmental minor consists of 3 substantive developmental courses. One of these course requirements is met by the integrated lifespan development sequence of PSY 542 and PSY 575, which provides background in normal and abnormal development across the lifespan. The two additional courses for the minor can include substantive courses offered in the Psychology department's Developmental area and HD FS (and, on some occasions, other departments that offer a course with a clear developmental foundation). With the advice of the advisor, some students fulfill one course requirement for the minor by taking a developmental methods course (i.e., specific methods for analyzing change over time). As an alternative, students may take the formal HD FS minor (15 credits) to satisfy the child clinical track's developmental minor requirement. For students entering the child track in the Fall 2005 or later, there is no longer an additional minor research project requirement (beyond other required research projects). Instead, conducting at least one developmentally framed study during graduate training satisfies the research portion of the developmental minor.

##### b. ADULT TRACK STUDENTS

For those in the adult clinical track, the minor requirement is met with an additional research project (beyond other required research projects) or a substantive paper. This project may be conducted within any area of interest and is typically used as a means to satisfy the departmental requirement of

working with more than one faculty member. This project should result in a high quality written product of potentially publishable quality that is then turned in as part of, and at the same time as, the student's written comprehensive examination. Adult clinical students wishing to develop a formal minor area of specialization (e.g., Women's Studies, Health Psychology, SCAN) may do so as long as the written minor project requirement is also met.

**BACKGROUND:** The breadth requirement is a longstanding requirement of the Psychology Department (please refer to the graduate guidelines on the department web site), reinforced by the APA's Discipline Specific Knowledge requirements and by state licensing boards. The requirement reflects the value placed in psychologists being trained broadly in their field and then specialized in a particular sub-discipline. At Penn State, this requirement involves (1) course requirements and (2) work in two different research programs, in order to gain breadth in content and in the conduct of research.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR BREADTH:** Graduate level course requirements are intended to build on students' prior foundational knowledge to provide breadth in content areas and to meet Discipline Specific Knowledge requirements.

Required courses provide fundamental grounding in the major theories and empirical literature in the particular domain of psychological functioning. These insure that students entering the job market are knowledgeable about classical and current work in the major fields and are able to communicate effectively with faculty from other areas. See the Clinical Program Manual for specific information about these requirements. Students who wish to deviate from recommended courses need to select these courses in consultation with the faculty advisor, clinical faculty, and DCT.

#### Clinical THESIS/Qualifying exam to Advance to Doctoral Candidacy

- **Written Summary of an Original Scientific Project:** This project will serve as the "equivalent" of a thesis. that permits evaluation of the 5 Psychology Assessment Dimensions
  - Scientific Knowledge
  - Critical Thinking Skills
  - Communication Skills (verbal and written)
  - Research Skills
  - Diversity and Ethical Considerations
- **Year 1**
  - Form Committee: 3 faculty
    - 2 clinical faculty, 1 outside of clinical faculty (Psychology or another department)
  - No Proposal
    - A 1-4 page prospectus will be circulated for the committee to approve.
      - Can be worked on as part of research methods course in spring semester of first year.
    - Once approved, email your advisor and graduate staff assistant (Sherri) that this step is complete
- **Year 2**
  - The written summary of an original scientific project will be circulated to the committee at least two weeks before a defense meeting is scheduled.
  - **Defense Meeting:** Held no later than the end of the spring semester.
    - A maximum 20-minute oral presentation of the project in the format consistent to a scientific conference presentation to assess oral communication skills.

- A maximum 40-minute question/answer/discussion/decision period with the committee.
- A maximum 60-minute total meeting time will facilitate scheduling the defense.
- Committee decides pass/fail.
- **Qualifying Exam for Advancement:** Advancement to doctoral candidacy is separate decision from whether thesis defense paperwork is a “pass”
- **The Written Summary**
  - **Format:** In the form of a paper ready for submission to a scientific journal.<sup>1</sup>
    - Submission and ultimate publication are strongly encouraged, but not required.
  - **Content:** A summary of an original empirical study, a meta-analysis, or a major systematic review of a body of empirical work.
    - Review papers must include a substantial focus on critical evaluations of the research methods in the review domain.
- The clinical area strongly encourages and expects all students to obtain a Master’s degree based in part on this project.

### Clinical Comprehensive Exam

Students are expected to take the comprehensive examination by the fall semester of the fourth year but must pass the Qualifying Exam prior to completing comps. Breadth comprehensive examination questions for both child and adult clinical tracks are available in the Clinical Program Manual Appendix C and D. Students who do not pass the examination on time will have a lower priority for funding and may have their assistantship appointment rescinded. **For a clinical student to apply for internship the student must have (a) passed the comprehensive examination and (b) successfully defended the dissertation proposal. Moreover, these must be accomplished by September 15<sup>th</sup> of the year the student applies for internship.**

**Adult Track:** For adult track comps, students must prepare answers to a standard set of questions covering major issues in clinical psychology having to do with psychopathology, assessment, psychotherapy, ethics, diversity, and research methodology. In 2016, the adult clinical comps procedures were modified. Students who entered the program before January 2014 have the option of completing comps in the old or new format. Students who entered the program in fall 2016 or afterward are required to complete comps in the new format.

For the “old” comps, the committee selects six of these questions (one from each domain) for the student to address in writing during the exam period (1 hour per question) without the aid of books or written material. Students can take the exam in one day (6 hours) or across two consecutive days (3 hours each day). For the “new” comps, the committee also selects six of these questions (one from each domain) for the student to address in writing during the exam period, without the aid of books or written material. Students can take the exam in one day (8 hours) or across two consecutive days (4 hours each day). The student must take the examination in the Moore Building in a location arranged with the Graduate Administrative Assistant (Sherri Gilliland).

The oral examination is based on the students’ written answers to the above questions, although any other questions within clinical psychology may be asked by committee members. It must take place within three weeks of the completion of the written examination. The oral examination is scheduled for at least

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<sup>1</sup> Students will also have to work up a version in the thesis format required by the graduate school for submission to the graduate school.

two hours. For adult track students, the written Minor Research Project must be completed and submitted to the committee along with the written comprehensive examination responses prior to the oral exam.

**Child Track:** The comprehensive examination is composed of 2 portions—depth and breadth—involving both a written and oral examination. For depth, the student writes and submits a publishable paper, book chapter, or submittable grant application. For breadth, the student writes 1 paper in each area of 3 areas of competence (psychopathology, assessment, and intervention). The specific depth requirements and breadth questions for child track comps can be found in Appendix C at the end of this manual.

Before beginning written comps, the student must consult with the primary advisor(s). After planning the approach to the written comps, the student must submit a written plan to the doctoral committee and gain approval from the doctoral committee members for the components of the plan, i.e., the approach to the selected questions and the approach to fulfilling the depth requirement. The doctoral committee is formed after the Qualifying Exam is passed and the student prepares to move on to the Comprehensive Exam. The student articulates his or her approach to comps, which provides an opportunity for feedback from committee members and heightens the likelihood that breadth and depth are appropriately covered.

- (a) Depth paper—the student articulates to the doctoral committee the type of depth paper to be written (e.g., book chapter, empirical article, major fellowship application), the topic chosen, and a general description of the approach to the topic. Usually this step will be taken first, but it is not required that it be first.
- (b) Breadth question papers—the student will describe to the doctoral committee the plan for demonstrating breadth of knowledge; once the committee has had an opportunity to review, question, and guide the plan and it is approved, the committee chair notifies the student. The student must then submit the papers to the committee 1 month from that date.

Competence in research methods, ethics, supervision, consultation and diversity is infused in courses and practica and evaluated throughout the curriculum, and students should integrate these competencies into their breadth and depth papers. Most students will complete the depth portion first. Approximately 3 weeks after completing the breadth papers and submitting the breadth and depth papers to the Administrative Support Assistant for Graduate Student Records (Sherri Gilliland), the student must orally defend the work. At the oral defense, the student can be queried about any of 6 areas of competence: psychopathology, assessment, intervention, research methods, ethics, and diversity. **The student is responsible for contacting the Graduate office (Sherri Gilliland) about the start of the breadth papers (by sending the email with committee approval to the office) and for informing the office of the date scheduled for the oral defense.**

#### Clinical Dissertation Requirements

The dissertation committee must include at least one member of the clinical faculty. Child-clinical students must have at least one committee member from the child-clinical track and adult-clinical students must have at least one committee member from the adult-clinical track. Additionally, all dissertation committees must include a faculty member outside of the Psychology Department. Any outside member must meet the University Graduate School requirements for committee members.

Note that the **adult clinical track** requires that one of the projects that students conduct during their time at Penn State (Masters, Minor, Dissertation) is a project that they have designed (with the help of their mentors) and carried through to the end. The faculty believe that this is an important educational tool for becoming an independent researcher. Although it would be ideal for all students, we recognize that the child track students may be unable to do this, as the time to recruit and conduct research with children, particularly from a developmental perspective, can be prohibitive.

## II. Cognitive Area Graduate Requirements

The goals of the major requirements are to:

- (a) attain sufficient background in your chosen sub-area to be able to propose and conduct independent research
- (b) attain sufficient background in the broader field of cognitive psychology to be able to discuss and collaborate with people outside of your immediate sub-area of research.

Specific requirements for cognitive students in fulfilling the 18 credits in their major area are the following:

- (1) One course (3 credits) must be the area proseminar (PSY 524).
- (2) No more than one course (3 credits) may be filled at the 400 level.
- (3) No more than 3 credits may be filled through independent study.
- (4) Two courses (6 credits) must include PSY 520, 521, 525s (or the equivalent that focus on content domains within cognitive psychology).

The goal of the breadth requirement is to be prepared as a generalist in psychology so that you can communicate with and possibly collaborate with psychologists in different major areas of the field. 400-level courses cannot be applied to the 12 credits of breadth requirement, unless the student has successfully petitioned for such to the cognitive area faculty. No more than 6 credits of independent studies can be counted towards breadth requirements.

Students should be communicating regularly with their advisor while working out their plans for how they will meet the requirements. The cognitive faculty as a whole must approve this plan no later than the end of the first semester for the student's second year.

Finally, additional requirements for cognitive students are the following:

- (1) Students are expected to attend the weekly cognitive area brown bag, and to occasionally present their research in that setting.
- (2) At the end of each academic year, students are to file (via Qualtrics) a current vita, a statement of progress through the past year, and a statement of plans for the subsequent year.

Cognitive area guidelines for master's degree and advancement to candidacy

The department guidelines stipulate the timeline and more general aspects of the candidacy and master's degree aspects of the Phd program within Psychology. Here we stipulate area specific components of these two crucial aspects of progress through the early stages of the graduate program.

### Additional Information

1. Please note that the major and breadth requirements are independent. There is flexibility in terms how courses are mapped into those requirements, but the same course may not be counted in both places. For questions about placing courses, please consult with your advisor or the area coordinator.
2. For classes equivalent to 525 permission should be sought from the area coordinator with the provision that the class covers an in-depth survey of a focal content area within cognitive psychology.
3. In addition to the formal requirements listed above, all students in the cognitive program are expected to be continuously engaged in research and to participate in the Cognitive Brownbag meetings.

4. Requirements of other programs and specializations (SCAN, Language Science, etc.) may, when appropriate, be applied toward breadth or major requirements, but do not need to be listed on this form. They should be noted elsewhere in the annual evaluation portfolio.
5. The requirement to conduct research with a second faculty member may be met by the breadth project, by SCAN lab rotations, or by collaboration that is not related to other requirements. However, it is expected that this work will result in a written product that can be evaluated by the doctoral committee at or prior the dissertation defense.
6. Exceptions to these requirements are to be discussed with the advisor and approved by the Cognitive faculty and, in certain circumstances, by the Director of Graduate Training.

### **Qualifying Exam:**

The qualifying exam (advancement to candidacy) is the crucial step in your progress towards a PhD according to the University's Graduate School. This is a marker that you have the training, skills and competence to proceed onward to a graduate education and you are not considered a doctoral student until this milestone is passed.

### **The committee:**

Your qualifying exam will be mediated through a committee consisting of two members of the cognitive area, and an external member approved by the two cognitive committee members.

The project that will suffice for advancement to candidacy should be an empirical or computational project, which means that it relies on analyses of data or simulations that you have developed yourself. These analyses and simulations can use data collected by others, if agreed by the committee. This could be a meta-analysis, if the committee approves. However pure theory or review papers are not considered sufficient for demonstrating mastery in all of the areas.

In some cases, a student may wish to present a first-author published paper, or MA degree from a different institution as evidence of candidacy. The committee will decide in such cases to what extent this material is suitable for completing the requirements of the qualifying exam. In some cases the committee could decide that the submitted material requires an additional research project or written component. This additional component would serve to demonstrate their mastery of the topic and tie their work to the area of study. The committee may also decide that the previously completed material is not suitable for advancement, which might be the case if it is too far removed from the student's research program, or not of sufficient depth to clearly demonstrate mastery.

The committee is the ultimate decision maker when it comes to determining the suitability of a project.

The committee will determine whether a pre-approval meeting (i.e. a proposal defense) is required. However an oral defense of the final project is required and should occur at a meeting that can either be open or closed to the public, at the discretion of the committee. An oral defense is required of all students, even if advancement is based on an existing paper or MA degree.

Preapproval procedure: For all qualifying exam options (a project, an existing MA paper, or a new MA paper), preapproval of the project will be obtained via the following process:

- 1) A 2-4 page proposal will be submitted to all committee members.
- 2) The committee will have 2 weeks to provide feedback to the student.
- 3) The student will then have 2 weeks to incorporate the committee's feedback into the proposal and resubmit the final proposal to the committee for approval.
- 4) Inform the Graduate Training staff assistant (Sherri) when it has been approved.  
Any adjustments to this timeline must be approved by the committee chair.

**It is recommended that the above steps be completed before the end of the student's 3<sup>rd</sup> semester in the program such that the defense can occur in the 4<sup>th</sup> semester.**

**Master's degree:**

The student may optionally choose to submit their candidacy document and oral defense to earn a master's degree from PSU using the same committee. All of the stipulations related to qualifying exam apply with the additional constraint that the student would need to complete additional paperwork to submit their work as a thesis. This includes reformatting the document as a thesis according to Graduate School guidelines, and having the committee members sign off on a thesis document in addition to the advancement to candidacy document. This process may involve revisions to the thesis prior to earning the master's degree, even though the qualifying exam has been approved.

**Cognitive Area Comprehensive Exam Procedure - Revised April 2016**

Although "The Department of Psychology has no formal structure or procedure for the comprehensive exam" (Graduate Student Guidelines, p. 37), the faculty of the cognitive program have developed procedures to provide consistency in the comprehensive exam for students in the cognitive program. The comprehensive exam process begins with the selection of a dissertation committee. As described in the Guidelines (p. 36), this committee includes at least four faculty members, one of whom must be from a department other than Psychology. After selecting a dissertation committee and being advanced to candidacy, graduate students should follow these steps to complete the comprehensive exam:

1. The student will prepare 10 questions in consultation with the members of the committee. The questions should be distributed over content areas corresponding to the expertise of the committee members (as it is relevant to the particular student's program). The questions should require general knowledge and integration within the domains selected. The distribution of questions over committee members and distribution of content should be worked out by the student and adviser in consultation with other committee members. The role of each committee member in developing questions may vary as appropriate to the student's program and that member's expertise, and that role should be worked out by the student and adviser in consultation with the members of the committee. The scope of each question should be such that it can be answered in not more than 8 typed, double-spaced pages. The student should also develop a brief list of readings central to each question, again in consultation with the committee members. It is recommended that the readings be composed of approximately 10 empirical articles and/or chapters (or the equivalent).
2. When the student has agreed on a list of questions and readings with committee members, the complete list will be circulated to the full committee for approval. Upon approval, the comprehensive examination period will begin. The written and oral portions of the comprehensive examination should be scheduled at this time, and the Psychology Records Office notified of the schedule.
3. Within one month after the list of questions is approved or with consultation of the committee, the written examination period will begin. At the beginning of this period, the student will receive a list of questions chosen by the committee from the approved list. This list of questions will include four questions, distributed over the domains of the committee members' expertise. The written examination period will be 72 hours (3 days) in length. During this time, the student will prepare a typed answer to each question, not to exceed 8 double-spaced pages per question. This written test will be "open book" and the writing may be done at times and places to fit the student's convenience.
4. Within 2 weeks after the written examination period, the committee will meet to conduct the oral portion of the comprehensive exam. At this meeting, the student should be prepared to discuss his or her written answers, the other questions on his or her list, and related topics. In addition the committee may request that the student discuss his or her plans for the dissertation. The oral exam will take two hours or less, and the result of the exam will be available at the end of the meeting.

### III. Developmental Area Requirements

Training in the Developmental Area will provide students with theoretical and research depth in one or more of the following areas:

- Biological Bases of Development: Genetics, Hormones, Brain Imaging, and Psychophysiology
- Perceptual, Cognitive, Language and Symbolic Development
- Gender Development
- Emotion, Temperament, and Adjustment
- Ecology of Development

#### Research Training

Training is largely focused on excellence in research and preparation for an academic career. Students will have at least 2 mentors during their tenure in the program. Most students will have a primary mentor and research interest, typically established upon entry into the program. Students in the program are required to work in more than one research lab (i.e., with more than 1 faculty member). Although it would be ideal for students to choose a secondary mentor within the developmental area, this is not required. Students should choose a second mentor (research lab experience) that best fits their interests. We strongly encourage students to be involved in collaborative research that may bridge across the two lab experiences.

*Grant Writing.* We strongly encourage students to write predoctoral grants. There are a number of different mechanisms for doing this (e.g., NIH NRSA, NSF graduate fellowship, foundation fellowships). The key advantages to writing and obtaining a predoctoral grant are (1) you are able to tailor your training and research to best fit your interests; (2) your funding is secure for (usually) three years after receiving such a grant without the need to teach; (3) receiving such an award demonstrates that you are fundable; and (4) the awards are prestigious and look very good on your CV. There will be a number of training opportunities around grant writing including an occasional formal course and professional development discussions in proseminar. You should begin discussions of grant writing with your advisor(s) as soon as you can.

*Research productivity.* Students are expected to demonstrate development toward a productive research career through participation in conferences and publication of manuscripts. The level of productivity will vary depending on the nature of the research, training goals of individual faculty mentors, availability of datasets, and the stage of students' training. However, we expect all students to demonstrate dissemination of their research throughout their graduate career. Again, students should address these issues with their research advisors upon arrival into the program.

*Research Ethics.* As scientists in training, it is important to understand the ethical issues that must be considered when conducting, reporting, and conceiving scientific research. In conducting a research project, care must be taken to ensure the physical and psychological safety of research participants. All projects must be reviewed and approved by the University's Institutional Review Board before engaging in the research activities. It is also important, especially in conducting research with children, to monitor the well-being of participants while they are engaged in the project and terminate any activities that appear to create undue distress or might result in other harmful outcomes. Accuracy in the analysis and reporting of scientific research is also of utmost importance. Science is essentially an honor system that is based on the trust of your colleagues. Misrepresenting or misreporting the results of your research is a violation of this trust and can not only damage your reputation as a scientist, it can result in other scientists wasting valuable time and resources in attempts to replicate or follow up on misreported findings. Finally, the ideas and the empirical testing and verification of these ideas are the currency of one's reputation as a scientist. In the conception and reporting of your research,

it is important to acknowledge the work of other scientists that have contributed to the area, and it is important not to represent the contributions of other scientists as your own.

### Developmental Area Requirements (Pre-Doctoral)

In addition to departmental course and program requirements, the developmental area has outlined a set of requirements that must be completed prior to the commencement of doctoral work (comps and dissertation). These include satisfactory performance in coursework and demonstrating the ability to develop and complete graduate-level research.

#### 1. Coursework

##### *Statistics Courses (at least 6 credits)*

Students are required to take a minimum of two statistics classes (e.g., the two-semester stats sequence). Courses other than the standard sequence will also be accepted. Refer to the departmental guidelines for further details.

It is highly recommended that Developmental Area students take courses that are relevant to developmental methods beyond the initial sequence. The Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) department is an excellent resource for further course offerings and students are encouraged to take as many statistics courses through HDFS as possible. Other departments including Statistics, Educational Psychology and Biobehavioral Health (BBH) also offer highly relevant statistics courses.

##### *Breadth Course Requirement (12 credits)*

There are three “breadth” options requiring at least 12 credits taken outside the major area, which are further detailed in the department guidelines. Talk to your advisor and area coordinator for advice on these options.

The Specialization in Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience (SCAN) can count to fulfill this requirement. More information on SCAN can be found at <http://psych.la.psu.edu/neuroscience/>.

##### *Area Course Requirements (15 credits + prosem)*

The following courses are required for all Developmental students

- Fundamentals of Social Development (PSY 547)\*
- Fundamentals of Cognitive Development (PSY 548)\*
- Developmental Theories (PSY 549)\*
- One 3-Credit Child Development Seminar (PSY 529, see list below for course offerings) offered by a member of the developmental area faculty (or HDFS faculty); OR another developmental topic course approved by the faculty\*\*
- One additional 500-level course pertaining to developmental research methods or statistics approved by the area faculty. More than one is encouraged.
- Continuous registration in the one-credit Developmental Proseminar (PSY 529)

\*These three courses represent the three fundamental courses required for all incoming graduate students in the developmental area. These courses should be completed in Years 1&2.

\*\*PSY 529, or other special topics courses like 511, 597 (new courses offered routinely)

Gender Development

Developmental Behavior Genetics

Cognitive Development

Developmental Neuroscience

Grant Writing Seminar

Family Relationships across the Lifespan

Temperament (HDFS offering)

Regulatory Processes in Human Development (HDFS offering)

## 2. Qualifying Exam

While the developmental area and the department see the Master's thesis as an important milestone in your training, to the Graduate School the key milestone is the qualifying exam. Passing your qualifying exam officially designates that you are ready to proceed with doctoral-level work and you are officially a doctoral candidate. You are not considered a "doctoral student" until you have passed your qualifying exam.

According to the Graduate School, qualifying exam decisions are based on a product that occurs in 3 semesters, and should be completed prior to the third year in graduate school. In the developmental area, the qualifying exam is not a traditional exam or test. Rather, it is a **First Year Project** that involves an original research question, an empirical test of that research question, and a write-up of the results such that there is a tangible research product. This product can be a Master's thesis (which, at your discretion, can be submitted for a Master's degree), a portion of a Master's thesis, or a substantive research project (e.g., a conference poster or paper presentation), at the discretion of the faculty. A major criteria in selecting which type of project is most fitting is that it is feasible and can be completed in the first three semesters of the graduate program.

In order to pass your qualifying exam you must form a committee of at least two members of the developmental area, and an external member approved by your committee chair. The First Year Project should be an empirical or computational project, meaning that it relies on analysis of data. The data that can be used include data that were collected by others or a meta-analysis, if your committee approves. It is also possible to collect your own data as long as you are able to complete a tangible research project within 3 semesters and your committee approves. Pure theory or review papers *are not* sufficient. The committee will determine whether a pre-approval meeting (proposal defense) is required. An oral defense of the final project IS required and should occur at the developmental area proseminar, typically during the Fall semester of the student's second year.

Completing the qualifying exam prior to the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year will keep you in good standing with the department, area, and graduate school.

## 3. Master's Thesis and Master's Degree

The Master's thesis is a core research and training process in your first two years in the program.

We expect that all students will propose their Master's thesis by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> year in the program and successfully defend no later than the Spring of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year (i.e., by May). Most students then choose to submit the thesis to the graduate school in order to receive the Master's degree. This last step, however, is at your discretion.

Some students may submit their First Year Project and oral defense as their Master's Thesis using the same committee. The final determination about whether this would be acceptable will be made by the committee. Regardless of whether this is considered acceptable, additional work, including reformatting the document as a thesis according to the Graduate School guidelines, and having the committee members sign off on a thesis document would then be required. This process is likely to involve revisions to the thesis prior to earning a Master's degree.

If you entered the program with a Master's Degree from another institution, you may submit it to your committee for approval as part of the Master's Thesis and degree process at PSU. The committee will determine if, and if so how, your previous work fits into your program of study and research here. In some cases, the committee may accept your Master's thesis from another institution as fulfilling your Master's thesis requirement. In some cases your Master's thesis may be too disparate from your work in the department (e.g., a thesis in electrical engineering). Here, the student can approach the process with a clean slate, and use the process noted above.

Completing your Master's thesis will keep you in good standing in the area and in the department. In addition, keeping to this timetable will position you to complete the comprehensive exam and defense in the spring of your 3<sup>rd</sup> year and provide ample time for dissertation research.

Students can find more information on the Master's thesis project in the department handbook and graduate school webpage.

### Doctoral Requirements

Once students have completed their qualifying exam requirements, there are two remaining requirements, the comprehensive exam and the dissertation.

#### 1. Comprehensive Exam (Comps) Procedures

The comprehensive exam is comprised of two parts: breadth and depth. We expect that all students will write and defend their comprehensive exam before the beginning of their 4<sup>th</sup> year. After completing the qualifying exam requirements, students will be ready to work on comps. With the doctoral committee, students will be required to pass a written and oral defense of comps.

**1a. Breadth.** The breadth aspect of the comprehensive exam will provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate their mastery of the field of developmental psychology as a whole (its core concepts, theories, empirical literatures, methods). In order to demonstrate their understanding of the field of developmental psychology students will be asked to write answers to **three** of the following questions (randomly selected within category for each student) over the course of a month. Note, the questions listed below are meant to be representative of the types and scope of questions you may be asked. Actual questions may vary slightly in wording and content.

The breadth questions will be graded by the two developmental area faculty on the comps committee plus one additional developmental faculty member not on the comps committee. The results of the grading will be discussed at the defense of the full comprehensive exam and there are no constraints on materials that can be used during the writing.

### **BREADTH QUESTIONS (Updated 9.18.13)**

#### **Theoretical/Conceptual Questions**

1. How does a developmental approach to psychology differ from a non-developmental approach? What does it mean to be a developmental psychologist and do developmental science?
2. Describe the origins of one developmental theory/perspective from the list below. Include a (brief) historical overview, evolution of the methods that have been used to examine the theory/perspective, how the theory/perspective has changed over time and/or how the approach to the theory/perspective has changed, and speculate on the future of this theory/perspective. Below is a list of possible theory/conceptual approaches:
  - a. developmental behavior genetics
  - b. social learning theory, social-cognitive theory
  - c. developmental psychopathology
  - d. dynamic systems
  - e. developmental neuroscience
  - f. ecological theories
  - g. constructivist theories
3. How does theory inform our work, guide our questions, and explain development? What is the difference between a theory, an approach, a set of hypotheses? Do we need theories to formulate questions and move the field of developmental psychology forward?
4. There have been a number of extremely influential theories in developmental psychology (e.g., Piaget, Bronfenbrenner). You will be presented with one or more theories and be asked to briefly describe the

theory, discuss the strengths and weaknesses, and discuss where there may be controversies, and finally what the theory does a good job at addressing and where it might fall short.

5. Please choose one of the following domains of development (language, emotion, perception, temperament/ personality, cognition, social relationships) and discuss the main contemporary theoretical and conceptual orientations that characterize developmental research in that domain.

6. It is said that the nature/nurture debate is now over. Do you agree? If so, indicate how contemporary thought and empirical work in developmental psychology shows the “truce.” If not, indicate how the debate is still enacted in contemporary thought and empirical work in developmental psychology, and how it might be resolved or refined.

### **Methods/Approach questions**

7. Discuss multiple ways that developmental psychologists look for converging evidence across studies and how we might (or should) use convergence to make inferences about development, and to inform future studies.

8. Discuss the value of an interdisciplinary perspective/approach. Include in this discussion consideration of the types of questions that can best be answered by multiple disciplines and/or are better kept within a single discipline. Are there disadvantages to interdisciplinary research?

9. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of different types of developmental research on the continuum from basic through translational to applied research. Illustrate by choosing a developmental domain and highlight published studies that address a similar question from basic, translational, and applied approaches.

10. Choose 1 domain of development where you think an individual difference approach has been done well and 1 domain of development where you think this approach has been neglected or has been weak. In each domain, discuss some exemplar studies, present an integrative summary across studies, and lay out some new research that should be done and explain what this new research could contribute.

11. What do we learn from an individual differences vs. normative perspective on development? Are there some domains of development where one approach (individual differences or normative) is essential? Are there some domains of development where one approach is not valid or necessary?

12. Cognition/language and social/emotional development are often studied separately, yet there are attempts to bridge this gap. Discuss why the two domains have been studied separately, and the benefits of merging them. Provide an example of research where these aspects of development are bridged successfully.

13. Please describe and give an example of these different developmental designs: cross-sectional, longitudinal, cross-sequential. What inferences can be drawn from each type of design? Compare and contrast the designs. Please write your answer in the context of a specific research question in your area of expertise.

14. It is now common to consider culture in studying developmental phenomena. What is meant by culture? How can culture affect development? Is it possible to do good developmental science without studying culture? Provide an empirical example of each of the following: (a) the ways in which understanding of development is enhanced by consideration of culture and (b) the ways (if any) in which it is reasonable to ignore culture.

15. It is now common to consider culture and genes in studying developmental phenomena. Does this mean that it is now necessary to consider all potential influences on development? What are the reasons to add genes, brain function, and culture to developmental studies? What are the costs of failing to include any or all of genes, brain function, and culture?

**1b. Depth.** Our belief is that the comprehensive exam provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their depth of mastery within one or more specialty areas, including links between those specialty areas and the broader field of developmental psychology. The doctoral committee will have flexibility in determining the work that will be required for this portion of comps. The format for the comprehensive

exam for *depth of knowledge* can take many forms and will be determined by the student and his/her committee. Below are a few possible examples:

- ~Students may generate a small set of potential depth questions (5-6) from which the doctoral committee will select 1-2 for the student to write.
- ~Students may submit a grant proposal (e.g., NRSA application) as representing depth in area of research.
- ~Students may write a review paper on particular topic. This paper should be deemed of publication quality.

## 2. Dissertation

Students can find information about the dissertation project in the department handbook and graduate school web site.

## Yearly Evaluation

### Goal Setting

Each spring students will submit a list of goals for the upcoming year (these should be turned in with your progress reports). The structure for this is currently open, but should discuss research goals and planned progress toward meeting those goals. These goals should also include proposed coursework and how both research and coursework are setting a course relevant to your future plans.

As part of the spring goal setting, students will be required to work toward an “application ready” version of a research statement. Each year in the program students will submit these statements. Of course, early in students’ careers these will be a challenge to write and we do not expect these to be application ready until the student is ABD. For instance, first year students will be expected to focus on their emerging area of research interests and thesis topic. Faculty will provide constructive feedback for improvement. We believe the process of working on these statements each year will be an important professional development activity. It will also help students think more prospectively and broadly about the impact of their research by helping them to develop a program of research that is cohesive and provide a forum for discussion of links among seemingly diverse research topics. Students in their last year of the program will also be asked to submit a teaching statement since that will also be an integral part of job applications.

### Progress Report

Each spring students will submit a report on progress from the previous year (due by middle of April). Through the departmental Qualtrics survey, students will note coursework completed, whether working in two labs has been completed, master’s/dissertation progress, and any presentations or manuscripts completed or in progress. Please also submit your CV and a copy of your in-progress research statement. In addition to uploading this information via Qualtrics, we ask email the CV and research statement as PDF documents via email to the Area Coordinator.

The faculty in the area will meet to discuss each student’s progress. Students will be evaluated on their progress toward the previous year’s goals and progress toward completion of program timeline (e.g., coursework, thesis, comps). We will also solicit input from faculty with whom you’ve worked (i.e., research and teaching). In cases where students are not in good standing, there will be discussion of a lack of progress, plans to remediate, and possible contingencies that may arise if progress is not observed by specified deadlines (e.g., funding decisions).

Students will then receive a letter summarizing the evaluation of progress including strengths and places where improvement could be made. Students are expected to sign the letter, acknowledging that they have read and understood the feedback. The signed original will be placed in the students file (a copy in the graduate training office and a copy in the areas file). These letters are to be completed and in students’ files by May 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.

## **Summary of Developmental Area Requirements**

### *Required Coursework*

Statistics: 6 credits

PSY 507 and 508 or equivalents

Breadth: 12 credits

Courses outside of the developmental area (e.g., SCAN)

Area requirements (15 + credits)

PSY 547: Fundamentals of Social Development

PSY 548: Fundamentals of Cognitive Development

PSY 549: Developmental Theories

PSY 529: Child Development Seminar (topic varies)

500-level methods course (topic and department offering varies)

PSY 529: Developmental Proseminar, every semester

### *First Year Project*

Present in Fall of 2<sup>nd</sup> year in program to Developmental Proseminar

### *Qualifying Exam*

By end of 2<sup>nd</sup> year in the program

### *Master's Thesis (plus oral defense) OR other project (plus oral defense)*

Before the beginning of 3<sup>rd</sup> year in the program

### *Comprehensive Exam*

Before the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> year in the program

#### **IV. I/O Area Goals and Requirements**

The Penn State I/O program also strives for a balance in exposure to personnel (I) and organizational (O) aspects of the discipline. Our goal is to develop students such that they can be effective in all settings: academic, research, industry, and consulting.

##### **A. Coursework**

*Quantitative Methods.* All graduate students are required to take the following courses:

- PSY 507: Data Analysis I
- PSY 508: Data Analysis II
- PSY 535: Research Methods
- PSY 597: Advanced Statistics

*I/O Content (2 survey, 2 depth, practicum)*

Survey of I/O. All graduate students are required to take two survey courses, one representing the Industrial side of the field and the other representing the Organizational side of the field. Both should be taken in the student's first year of study.

PSY 522: Survey of I

PSY 523: Survey of O

Depth Topics in I/O. All graduate students are required to take 15 additional credits of depth topics.

PSY 538 Depth I (examples: Selection, Counterproductive Work Behaviors, Personality, Creativity & Innovation, and Customer Service)

PSY 537 Depth O (Examples: Motivation and Emotion, Groups and Teams, Leadership)  
597 "Wild Card" (any I, O, or Statistics course of interest)

*I/O Practicum.* All graduate students are required to be enrolled in the I/O Practicum course (PSY 534) for six consecutive semesters beginning with the first year in the program. First-year students are enrolled in the practicum, but have reduced involvement in and responsibility for practicum projects.

*Additional Courses.* All graduate students are required to take one 500-level courses. That course may be within psychology broadly, within I/O psychology specifically, or outside of the area. The primary criteria guiding course selection is that the course contributes to the career goals of the student and is guided by input by the students primary advisor.

*Breadth Requirement.* I/O students have three options for completing the Department's Breadth Requirement:

- 1) *Departmental Breadth (option C).* I/O students can take a minimum of 12 psychology credits, including one course in each of the Department's four program areas outside of I/O (clinical, cognitive, developmental, and social). In order to assure achievement of breadth of knowledge of psychology outside of I/O, the courses selected must be disciplinary, content based courses that represent clinical, cognitive, developmental, and social domains.
  - Note that the I-O program strongly encourages you to take 500-level courses to satisfy any of the Department's breadth requirement options, but some 400-level courses may be used if approved by your advisor.
- 2) *Minor Specialization.* I/O students can develop a specialization in an area of psychology (but outside of I/O), or an area outside of psychology (e.g., management, HDFS). This option involves selecting an advisor, completion of coursework, and a research project.

- A total of 12 credits is needed, usually 9 credits of coursework plus 3 credits of independent study with the specialization advisor.
- A project of some type (empirical study, theoretical development paper, literature review) must be completed as part of the comprehensive oral exam.
- In addition to the 12 credits to complete a minor specialization, I/O students must take an additional 3 credits that may be from a range of content areas, including within I/O Psychology, Psychology broadly, or outside of Psychology (e.g., management).

3) *Official External Minor*. Although the first three options listed above constitute area and departmental breadth requirements, students may also elect to complete an “official” doctoral minor in a specific graduate program outside of psychology (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/forms-and-documents/ges-owned-forms-and-documents/addgrminorpdf/>). Interested students should contact the graduate administrative assistant and/or graduate coordinator of the program in which they are interested in pursuing a minor for further information.

- Official **doctoral minors require a minimum of 15 credits with at least six of those credits at the 500-level or higher.**
- In addition to the 15 credits to complete an external minor, I/O students must take an additional 3 credits that may be from a range of content areas, including within I/O Psychology, Psychology broadly, or outside of Psychology (e.g., management).

#### B. MASTERS THESIS Requirements in I/O

- Form the master’s committee by the summer of year 1
- Orally propose the written thesis proposal by the beginning of the fall semester of year 2
  - At this meeting, special attention will be given to the content and scope of the project to ensure that it is feasible to complete the thesis by the end of the spring semester of the student’s second year. Be sure to inform the Graduate Staff Assistant (Sherri) when this step is complete.
- Orally defend the thesis before the Master’s committee by the end of the spring semester of year 2
  - At this meeting, the committee makes the decision of whether to advance the student to candidacy, determining the student’s capability for doctoral-level work in I/O.
  - Note that failure to successfully defend the Master’s thesis by the end of summer semester of the second year constitutes poor standing in the I/O area and the department.
- It is highly recommended that students complete thesis revisions, format the thesis according to Graduate School guidelines, and submit the thesis to the Graduate School in order to earn a Master’s degree.

#### C. Comprehensive Exams in I/O. Passing the comprehensive exam – and moving to the doctoral dissertation stage - involves multiple hurdles. These are:

1. **Breadth of knowledge:** Complete written comp exam showing breadth and ability to communicate knowledge and issues using compelling and on-target evidence
2. **Depth in an area:** Submit a 5-8 page paper in one specific topic area of interest (typically dissertation pre-proposal).
3. **Orals:** Pass the oral defense of exam *and* discuss depth paper with committee
4. **Submit an article for peer review:** An important part of science is experience with peer review processes at journals. Prior to taking the comp exam, you must have submitted for peer review a

manuscript *for which you have had the primary responsibility of writing*: your thesis project, or a theoretical paper from a class, a *I-O Perspectives* essay or book chapter (if peer reviewed), a grant submission or response to calls for proposals (if necessary for your work)

### Action Steps for Comps

#### **1. Planning Comps**

- a. Discuss with advisor to ensure you have completed required coursework, practicum, and submitted an article for peer-reviewed publication by end of comps
- b. Form dissertation committee, which serves as your comp exam committee [Minimum 4: your advisor, 2 psych (I/O or other) and 1 external to psych].
- c. *Complete the I/O Competencies Checklist* (see p. 3 and submit to advisor)
- d. Discuss your initial idea for a depth paper (dissertation or other paper) with your advisor.

#### **2. Schedule comp exam**

- a. Discuss written exam timing with the exam cohort. The exam can be taken around November, April, or August. All comp exam-takers must take the written exam on the same day, in the same format (1 day or 2 half days) to standardized the exam.
- b. Arrange oral exam with your doctoral committee, falling 2-3 weeks after the writtens.
- c. Schedule both exams with Sherri Gilliland (sbg4@psu.edu) and obtain paperwork

#### **3. Take written exam**

- a. **Procedure.** You have a total of 24 hours (i.e., 12 hours on 2 days) to answer 6 questions (3 per 12 hour period). In order to maximize your comfort and success, you can choose your location and your starting time (between 8 to noon) with 12 hours (e.g., 9pm) from that time to submit your first 3 written responses to Sherri. This repeats the next day. The exam will be *open-book*, such that students can rely on internet sources, reference managers, course notes and syllabi, and other resources to respond to the questions.
- b. **Format.** I-O and methods questions are generated each year by ALL I/O faculty but your final set of comp exam questions are selected by a sub-set of faculty, including your committee chair. Your advisor will may opt to give the test taker 1-2 personalized questions (based on minor area, or specialization). You will receive a set of 10 questions and choose 6 to answer total. The questions will be in the area of General I/O, O, I, and Methods, and broad and integrative across topic areas. Each essay should be typed and double-spaced, and are typically around 6 pages (no more than 8!). In-text citations needed; a full reference list is appreciated though not required.
- c. **Evaluation & feedback.** You are being evaluated on your ability write a response that draws on existing theory and evidence, demonstrating critical thinking and analyze and synthesize that body of work in a coherent way. These are important skills for academic and practitioners. The committee will provide written feedback about your comp exam questions prior to the oral defense (ideally 5-7 days prior). The feedback may involve (a) concerns about specific areas of knowledge such that remediation is needed at the oral, or (b) general thoughts to consider and to discuss at the meeting. Use the feedback to prepare but keep in mind that other questions may arise at the oral comp.

#### **4. Submit dissertation pre-proposal (also referred to as the “depth” paper)**

- a. **Purpose:** To demonstrate depth of knowledge in an area, and to move you toward the dissertation (or another novel paper) effectively and efficiently by getting feedback from your committee at this stage.

- b. Content:** Within 5 days before your oral defense, submit to your committee a 5-page paper that identifies a gap, problem or controversy that you plan to address with a more complete depth paper and inquiry (i.e., the dissertation). Provide an overview of this topic and what is known, and then what is unknown and why this is important and interesting to know. Provide some basic idea about how (i.e., new theoretical model, research methods) you will pursue this knowledge in novel ways that make a contribution theoretically, empirically, and/or practically.

**5. Defend exam and paper orally**

- a. Purpose.** The oral gives you a chance to explain or justify unclear written responses in your written exam, or remediate knowledge based on feedback. It also gives you practice “thinking on your feet” and furthers development as an independent scholar.
- b. Evaluation.** Once all committee questions are answered, the student will step out of the room for the committee to render a decision about passing comps. This decision is based on the ability to speak coherently about the written responses, demonstrating knowledge even without the presence of online resources and ability to think and form informed opinions about I/O topics and issues guided by research.
- c. Dissertation pre-proposal (aka, “depth” paper) discussion.** Upon return, the committee will ask questions and offer feedback about the depth paper proposal to guide the dissertation process. If the comp exam answers require some remediation, the committee can opt to delay discussion of the depth paper and focus on remediation steps.

**D. Conduct Dissertation in I/O in your fifth year.**

## **V. Social Area Graduate Requirements**

**Major Requirement** Graduate students in Social Psychology are required to complete three core courses in order to assure a base and breadth of training. Students must also select three additional courses in Social Psychology; these should be chosen in consultation with a student's advisor and should reflect specialized interests and career plans. The courses are described in more detail below.

### **Core Courses**

- Introduction to Advanced Social Psychology (PSY 517) taught by social faculty
- The Art and Science of Social Psychology (PSY 597)
- Designing Research in Social Psychology (PSY 583)

Introduction to Advanced Social Psychology provides historical background and an overview of topics in social psychology at the graduate level and introduces students to important contemporary topics and controversies within social psychology. The Art and Science of Social Psychology fosters students' development of needed professional skill sets – including ethics, history, data analysis, writing -- and provides a platform for the development and initiation of independent research and research collaboration with other students. The Designing Research in Social Psychology course, in combination with the department requirement for statistics, provides students with an overview of methodologies and issues to consider in developing and conducting research, along with specific methodological skills.

**Additional Courses.** Students also need to develop a breadth of knowledge about several topic areas in social psychology. Students should take three additional advanced level courses in social psychology. The courses selected should reflect the special needs and interest of each graduate student. Reflection upon one's interest and consultation with one's advisor should guide selection of these additional courses. Any graduate (500 level) course taught by a social psychologist in our department can serve this requirement. Courses taught by social psychologists in other departments do not satisfy this requirement, but such courses can be used for breadth requirements. Independent study courses will not count toward the major requirement without special (written) permission from one's advisor.

**Breadth Requirement** (12 credits in areas outside the major area). The goal of the breadth requirement is to supplement students' training in the social psychological area(s) of particular interest to them. These courses should be helpful and meaningful to your plan of study. In most cases, students should think of this course work as similar to forming a minor. Course work for the breadth requirement can come from a single other area of psychology (e.g., Industrial-Organizational Psychology) or a single other department (e.g., Sociology), can involve courses with a topical focus that cuts across areas and departments (e.g., courses about emotion in Clinical Psychology, Psychophysiology, and Human Development and Family Studies), or be a formal minor offered through another department (e.g., graduate minor or dual-title degree in Women's Studies). Breadth courses are not required to constitute a formal minor; these courses should not be a haphazard selection, but one that is thoughtfully chosen in light of the student's professional plans.

In all cases, the student should develop a plan early in their graduate training (end of the first year) as to the type of courses they wish to take for the breadth requirement. The plan should note whether they are taking an approach akin to a minor. If the plan is to take a variety of courses, the plan needs to indicate the logic behind the variety of courses they are selecting. This planning should be done in consultation with one's advisor. The plan must be submitted in written form with the student's end-of-year report to the psychology advising office. The plan can be revised over the course of one's graduate training, but the justification for any changes should be made explicit.

Any 500 level course may count for this requirement. 400 level courses will only count with justification and special (written) permission by one's advisor. Up to 6 independent study credits may count toward this requirement. A brief written description of the nature of the independent study work must be provided to the student's advisor. When the independent study credits involve research projects, a final paper summarizing the research should be completed.

Statistics Requirement (6 credits within the first 2 years). At a minimum, required statistics courses should give in-depth knowledge of analysis of variance and regression. We recommend that students take additional courses on multivariate statistics. This includes courses on factor analysis, structural equation modeling, and hierarchical linear modeling. Specific course selection should be discussed with the student's advisor.

Weekly Colloquium. Students are required to attend the weekly social psychology area colloquium and present annually. The colloquium allows students to practice giving presentations on their research and learn to engage in scholarly discussion about the work of others (in the area and the department and from guest speakers).

### **Qualifying Exam to Advance to Doctoral Candidacy**

Written Summary of a Scientific Project: This project will serve as the “equivalent” of a thesis.

- **End of Year 1/Beginning of Year 2**
  - Form Committee: 3 Psychology faculty (2 social, 1 outside social)
  - Proposal
    - Presentation at prosem
    - A 1-2 page prospectus circulated for the committee to approve or
    - A research talk to committee members, with or without written proposal
- **By the End of Year 2**
  - The written summary of a scientific project will be circulated to the committee at least two weeks before a defense meeting is scheduled.
  - **Defense Meeting:** Held no later than the end of the spring semester.
  - **Advancement:** Occurs at the time the defense paperwork is filed as “pass”.
- **The Written Document**
  - **Format:** A paper ready for submission to a scientific journal. Submission and ultimate publication are encouraged, but not required.
  - **Content:** A write-up of empirical research
  - To receive masters, students must format and submit to college. Not required.

### **Comprehensive Examination**

- **Beginning of Year 3**
  - Form Committee: 4 Psychology faculty and 1 external faculty member
  - 1-2 Page Proposal (submitted to social area faculty)
- **By the End of Year 3/prior to start of Year 4**
  - The written summary of a scientific project will be circulated to the committee at least two weeks before a defense meeting is scheduled.
  - **Defense Meeting:** Held no later than the end of the July prior to start of year 4.
- **The Written Document**
  - **Format:** A paper ready for submission. Submission
  - **Content:**
    - A theoretical review paper. Submission and ultimate publication are encouraged, but not required
    - Large grant proposal or grant portfolio. Submission required.
    - Meta-analysis and/or literature review. Submission and ultimate publication are encouraged, but not required

## APPENDIX B: Departmental Specializations and Dual-Title Programs

### A. *Specialization in Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience (SCAN) Goals and Requirements*

The goal of the specialization in Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience (SCAN) is to prepare students for neuroscience-related careers. Towards that end, students will be required to complete several courses and participate in neuroscience-related research, as described below. Meeting the SCAN requirements automatically meets the Department's breadth/minor requirement. If the two semesters of SCAN-related research are conducted with someone other than the student's primary advisor, then the Department-level requirement to work with at least two faculty members is also met.

**Course Requirements.** The student should complete, by the end of the second year, the following courses:

- Foundations of Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience (Psychology 511, 3 credits)
- Methods of Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience (aka SCAN Methods; Psychology 5xx, 3 credits)

Students will also be required to participate in at least two additional topical seminars

- Seminar in Contemporary Psychology (PSY 511, 1-9 per semester, maximum of 12)
- Seminar in Cognitive Psychology (PSY 525, 3 per semester, maximum of 12)
- Seminar in Child Development (PSY 529, HDFS, 1-6 credits)
- Seminar in Social Psychology (PSY 571, 3-9 credits)

**Research and comprehensive exam requirements.** The student must complete two semesters of SCAN-related research, preferably spending at least one semester with someone other than the primary advisor. A member of the SCAN psychology faculty should be on the student's comprehensive committee and on the student's dissertation committee.

**Other activities.** All students in SCAN are also expected to participate in program seminars.

**Application process.** Students who wish to participate in SCAN should file an application (available from the Graduate Staff Assistant or as a downloadable pdf at the department website). The application should be approved by the student's advisor and the SCAN coordinator.

## B. *Dual-Title Ph.D. in Women's Studies & Psychology*

Penn State Psychology is one of only two graduate programs in the U.S. to offer a dual degree Ph.D. in Women's Studies and Psychology. Graduate students also have the option of a graduate minor in Women's Studies. Students in the dual-title degree program receive the Ph.D. in *Women's Studies and Psychology*. Psychology requirements are the same, the difference is that dual-degree students also take Women's Studies required and approved classes and incorporate women's studies theories and perspectives into their research. There are also requirements for the qualifying exam, and dissertation, as well as composition of the candidate's committee.

**How to apply:** Students may apply to Women's Studies for admission to the dual-degree program after acceptance into the Psychology program. The Women's Studies Department determines whether to admit the student. The student must declare the dual degree and must have a committee to reflect this (e.g., appropriate membership) by the time of Advancement to Candidacy. With careful planning, completion of the dual degree in Women's Studies and Psychology does not have to add time to degree.

### ***Psychology Requirements***

- 18 credits in psychology area (Clinical, Cognitive, Developmental, I/O, or Social)
- English language and SARI ethics requirement (PSY501 and scheduled SARI seminars)
- 6 credit stats sequence (PSY507 and PSY508)
- Master's thesis or Accepted Alternative (see Psychology Area Guidelines)
- Research with 2 or more faculty advisors
- Dissertation
- Clinical students must also complete Clinical Area graduate requirements

### ***Women's Studies Requirements*** <http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/W/GRAD%20WMNST>

- Feminist Research & Pedagogy (WMNST 501; section for social science), Feminist Theory (WMNST 507), and Global Feminisms (WMNST 502)
- 9 additional credits Women's Studies course work (minor research credits and certain seminars in Psychology may count toward Psychology degree requirements with approval)

### ***Other Requirements:***

Note that the Women's studies dual-title degree coursework fulfils the Breadth requirements (option B, minor specialization) for the Psychology Department and can fulfil the requirement to work with two different faculty advisors.

The masters' project committee must be comprised of at least three faculty members, two from the student's area in psychology and one from a different area within psychology or outside the department. At least one member of the thesis committee and two of the PhD dissertation committee must be a core or affiliate member of the Women's Studies faculty. These members are responsible for seeing that a portion of the student's comprehensive exam focus on feminist theory and method, global feminism, and feminist studies in the student's discipline. Research for the master's thesis and doctoral dissertation must be relevant to Women's Studies. The committee chair must be in both Psychology and Women's Studies (affiliate or budgeted). If not, then a co-chair needs to be appointed.

### ***Women's Studies Graduate Minor Requirements (Option B for Breadth)***

The Women's Studies graduate minor is available for any psychology graduate student who is interested in incorporating Women's Studies into their research, teaching, and practice in psychology, but who cannot undertake the dual degree. Requirements are as follows:

- Feminist Research & Pedagogy (WMNST 501) and Feminist Theory (WMNST 507)
- 3 additional electives in Women's Studies (qualifying seminars in Psychology also count toward Psychology degree requirements)

### *C. Dual Title Doctoral Degree in Language Science*

Students electing this degree program earn a degree with a dual- title at the Ph.D. level in Psychology and Language Science.

Program Objectives of the Dual-Title Degree in Language Science. A dual-title degree program in participating programs and Language Science will prepare students to combine the theoretical and methodological approaches of several disciplines in order to contribute to research in the rapidly growing area of Language Science. This inherently interdisciplinary field draws on linguistics, psychology, speech-language pathology, and cognitive neuroscience, as well as other disciplines, to address both basic and applied research questions in such areas as first and second language acquisition, developmental and acquired language disorders, literacy, and language pedagogy. Dual-title degree students will receive interdisciplinary training that will enable them to communicate and collaborate productively with a wide range of colleagues across traditional discipline boundaries. Such training will open up new employment opportunities for students and give them the tools to foster a thriving interdisciplinary culture in their own future students. The dual-title program will facilitate the formation of a cross-disciplinary network of peers for participating students as part of their professional development.

Admissions Requirements. To pursue a dual-title degree under this program, the student must first apply to the Graduate School and be admitted through one of the participating graduate degree programs (see Appendix E for admissions requirements of potential participating programs). Upon admission to one of the above programs and with a recommendation from a Language Science program faculty member in that department, the student's application will be forwarded to a committee that will include the Director of the Linguistics Program, one of the Co-Directors of the Center for Language Science, and a third elected faculty member within the Center for Language Science. All three committee members will be affiliated with the Program in Linguistics. Upon the recommendation of this committee, the student will be admitted to the dual-title degree program in Language Science.

Doctoral Degree Requirements. The dual-title Ph.D. degree in Language Science will have the following requirements.

1. Course work (21 credits of 500-level courses)
  - 6 credits, Proseminar in the Language Science of Bilingualism (LING 521), Proseminar in Professional Issues in Language Science (LING 522)
  - 3 credits, Research methods/statistics in Language Science (such as LING 525, PSY 507, PSY 508)
  - 3 credits in theoretical linguistics (students will choose between LING 500 or LING 504)
  - 3 credits, Cognitive Neuroscience or Psycholinguistics (such as PSY/LING 520, PSY 511)
  - 6 credits, Research internships (students will choose one course among the following: CSD 596, GER 596, LING 596, PSY 596, SPAN 596)
2. Language Science Research Meetings  
Students must participate in weekly Language Science Research meetings each semester in residence.
3. Foreign Language and English Competency Requirements  
The student will fulfill the language requirement specified by the participating department through which the student is admitted to the dual-title degree program.

4. Candidacy Examination

In order to be admitted to doctoral candidacy in the dual-title degree program, students will take a candidacy examination that is administered by the primary program. However, the dual-title degree student may require an additional semester or more to fulfill requirements for the primary program and dual-title program; therefore, the candidacy examination may be delayed. In addition, the student will be required to present a portfolio of work in Language Science to their committee. Such a portfolio would include a statement of the student's interdisciplinary research interests, a plan of future study, and samples of writing that indicate the student's work in Language Science. The candidacy examination committee will be composed of faculty from the primary program, as well as at least one faculty member affiliated with Language Science. The designated Language Science faculty member may be appointed in the student's primary program, but he or she may also hold a formal appointment with Linguistics. The Language Science member will participate in constructing and grading candidacy examination questions in the area of Language Science.

5. Doctoral Committee Composition

A doctoral committee consisting of at least four members of the Graduate Faculty must be appointed and will include a representative of the Language Science dual-title program. In addition, an official "outside member" must be appointed as one of the four members. The student's doctoral committee will include faculty from the primary program as well as faculty from Language Science. Faculty members who hold appointments in both the primary program and Language Science may serve in a combined role.

6. Comprehensive Examination

The student's doctoral committee will include faculty from the primary program as well as faculty from Language Science. Faculty members who hold appointments in both the primary program and Language Science may serve in a combined role. The Language Science representative(s) will help to insure that the field of Language Science is integrated into the comprehensive examination.

7. Dissertation

A dissertation on a topic related to Language Science is required for a dual-title Ph.D. degree in Language Science.

Linguistics Minor. The doctoral minor provides interested students with an opportunity to complete a program of scientific study focused on the nature, structure, and use of human language. The minor is designed to cover the foundations of the discipline of linguistics by reviewing fundamental core areas such as phonology and syntax. Course work is also available in many additional areas of linguistics such as semantics, morphology, language variation, historical linguistics, and discourse analysis.

The minor requires a minimum of 15 credits, 6 of which must be at the 500 level. Nine credits are prescribed in syntax (LING 400), phonology (LING 404), and a general introduction to linguistics (LING 401), although a linguistics course at the 500 level may be substituted for LING 401 with the approval of the director of the program in Linguistics.

## Dual-Title PhD in Psychology and Social Behavioral Neuroscience

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Beginning in Fall of 2019 students will be able to pursue a new dual title in Social Behavioral Neuroscience. Social behavioral neuroscience reflects the study of how brain development and function influence, and are influenced by, social environments and human interaction. The dual-title Ph.D. program provides students with additional training in the neurobiological foundations of brain function in order to enable them to pursue innovative interdisciplinary research with intellectual sophistication. Social Behavioral Neuroscience (SBN) represents a sub-domain within the Neuroscience discipline focusing on the relation between brain and cognition and behavior. As such, SBN seeks to connect at least two levels of analysis. Research that is solely restricted to a single level of analysis is not considered to fit within the SBN framework regardless of whether the single level is behavioral (e.g. examining cognitive task performance among individuals with Alzheimer's) or biological (e.g. examining the regenerative properties of neurons). Although each domain can have clear implications for the other, the SBN framework seeks to explicitly examine the associations between them.

The Social and Behavioral Neuroscience dual-title degree program is administered by the Social and Behavioral Neuroscience Steering Committee, which is responsible for the management of the program. The committee oversees the general direction of the program, identifies faculty and courses appropriate to the program, recommends policy and procedures for the program's operation to the Dean of the Graduate School, and is an advisory body to the program Director. The program enables students from participating graduate programs to obtain foundational graduate-level training in neuroscience as well as expertise in social and behavioral neuroscience theory, research, and methods. This dual-title training will enable rigorous research at the intersection of neuroscience and the students' partner discipline. To pursue a dual-title degree under this program the student must apply to the Graduate School and register through one of the approved graduate programs.

### Admission to the Dual-Title

Before they can apply for admission to the dual-title degree program, students must apply and be admitted to a primary graduate program with a formal affiliation to the dual-title, as well as to the Graduate School. The following graduate programs offer a dual degree in Social and Behavioral Neuroscience:

**Biobehavioral Health, Human Development and Family Studies and Psychology.**

Students may apply for enrollment in the dual-title degree program during their first year (second semester) or second year in their primary graduate program. Students must be admitted into the dual-title degree program prior to taking the qualifying exam. Students can be enrolled in any of the program areas within psychology: Clinical, cognitive, developmental, industrial/organizational, and social.

To apply, students should submit (1) a completed application form, (2) graduate and undergraduate transcripts, and (3) a letter of recommendation from their graduate adviser to the Psychology department member of the SBN Steering Committee.

## Degree Requirements

### Coursework:

All coursework requirements indicated below are in addition to the courses required in psychology. Students are encouraged to discuss their course planning with their advisor and the SBN coordinator in psychology in order to establish the most efficient path to fulfilling degree requirements. Students are permitted to take any of the required courses, including the SBN 590 seminar series, prior to declaring the dual-title, and may wish to do so as part of the process of deciding whether the dual-title is right for them.

The minimum course work requirements for the dual-title Ph.D. degree are as follows:

- NEURO 520 (3 credits)
- NEURO 511 (3 credits) *or* NEURO 512 (4 credits) *or* BIOL 478 (3 credits)
- SBN 590 (1 credit, taken twice)
- A minimum of 12 credits of approved SBN electives

### Approved Electives

- NEURO 521 (3 credits)
- HDFS 502: Biological Systems in Developmental Context
- HDFS 512: Cognitive Developmental Neuroscience of Adolescence
- PSY 524: Biological Basis of Behavior
- SBN 505 (3 credits, variable)
- SBN 508 (3 credits, variable)
- SBN 511 (3 credits, variable)

Courses offered under the 597 designation, or courses with a permanent course number but which may or may not fulfill the SBN objectives depending on the instructor offering the course in a given semester, can be approved on a case-by-case basis. Students requesting to have a course approved as counting toward the elective requirement should submit the syllabus to the psychology department coordinator. Requests will be reviewed by the Steering Committee or its designee.

Sample programs of coursework can be found at the bottom.

### Qualifying Research

In addition to the coursework criteria, students pursuing the dual-title must conduct dissertation research that meets the expectations of the program. Because SBN seeks to understand the associations between brain and behavior, SBN research must include a measure that has been determined to validly index and/or impact brain function, and must be explicit in how this measure contributes to our understanding of brain function. Examples can include measurement of electrical potentials at the scalp surface (EEG/ERP), cerebral changes in blood oxygenation or glucose utilization (fMRI, PET), structural anatomy of the brain (MRI, DTI), function of peripheral organs innervated by cranial nerves (heart, facial muscles), peripheral indices of central nervous system function (skin conductance, neuroendocrine measures such as cortisol), exogenously administered psychoactive medications (e.g. therapeutic or non-therapeutic substances), and variations in the genome and/or epigenome with biologically mapped implications for brain function. Measures of peripheral organ activity that are not mapped to central nervous system function (e.g. venous plethysmography, peripheral muscular control, spinal reflexes) are not sufficient. Techniques that use behavior to assume biological functionality (e.g. neuropsychological testing, behavioral genetics) are also not sufficient.

## **Committee Composition and Exam Format**

### Qualifying Examination Committee Composition

The qualifying examination committee must conform to all requirements of the graduate program in psychology and the Graduate Council. In accordance with Graduate Council, [the qualifying examination committee](#) must include at least one member of the SBN Graduate Faculty.

### Qualifying Exam

The dual-title degree will be guided by the Qualifying Exam procedure of the graduate program in psychology and the Graduate Council. The dual-title program defers to the primary program with regard to the format, structure and timing of the Qualifying Exam, as well as the discretion of the SBN representative to determine the appropriate exam content. Because students must first be admitted to a primary graduate program of study before they may apply to and be considered for admission into SBN, dual-title graduate degree students may require an additional semester to fulfill requirements for both areas of study and, therefore, the Graduate School permits the qualifying examination to be delayed up to one semester beyond [the normal period allowable](#).

### Ph.D. Committee Composition

The Ph.D. committee must conform to all requirements of the primary graduate program and the Graduate Council. In addition to the [general Graduate Council requirements for Ph.D. committees](#), the Ph.D. committee of an SBN student must include at least one member of the SBN Graduate Faculty. If the chair of the Ph.D. committee is not also a member of the Graduate Faculty in Social and Behavioral Neuroscience, a member of the committee representing SBN must be appointed as co-chair.

### Comprehensive Exam

The dual-title degree will be guided by the Comprehensive Exam procedure of the graduate program in psychology. After completion of required course work, SBN students must pass a comprehensive examination. In programs where this includes evaluation of a written exam, the SBN representative on the student's Ph.D. committee will participate in the writing and evaluation of the exam, in accordance with procedures maintained by the primary graduate program. In programs where the comprehensive exam involves defense of a dissertation prospectus, the SBN representative on the student's Ph.D. committee will participate in the evaluation of the prospectus, including ensuring the proposed dissertation has substantial SBN content.

## **Dissertation and Dissertation Defense**

Upon completion of the doctoral dissertation, the candidate must pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense) to earn the Ph.D. degree. Students enrolled in the dual-title program are required to write and orally defend a dissertation on a topic that reflects their original research and education in their primary graduate discipline and in SBN. The dissertation must be accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the heads of both graduate programs, and the Graduate School.

**Table 2. Illustrative Path Through the Dual-Title Ph.D.**

Course	Credits	PSY	SBN
<b>Year 1 Fall (Semester 1)</b>			
PSY 501: Seminar in General Psychology	1	CORE	
PSY 549: Developmental Theory	3	AREA	
PSY 507: Analysis of Psych. Data I	3	CORE (STAT)	
PSY 529: Seminar in Child Dev. (Dev. Proseminar)	1	AREA	
PSY 600: Thesis Research	1		
<b>Year 1 Spring (Semester 2)</b>			
PSY 548: Fundamentals of Cognitive Development	3	AREA	
PSY 508: Analysis of Psych. Data II	3	CORE (STAT)	
PSY 529: Seminar in Child Dev. (Dev. Proseminar)	1	AREA	
PSY 600: Thesis Research	1		
<b>Year 2 Fall (Semester 3)</b>			
PSY 547: Fundamentals of Social Development	3	AREA	
<b>NEURO 520: Social and Behavioral Neuroscience I</b>	3	BREADTH	Core
<b>SBN 590: Proseminar in Social and Behavioral Neuroscience</b>	1		Core
PSY 529: Seminar in Child Dev. (Dev. Proseminar)	1	AREA	
PSY 600: Thesis Research	2		
<b>Year 2 Spring (Semester 4)</b>			
PSY 529: Seminar in Child Dev. (Dev. Proseminar)	1	AREA	
<b>NEURO 521: Social and Behavioral Neuroscience II</b>	3	BREADTH	Core
<b>SBN 506: Seminar in SBN (developmental section)</b>	3	AREA	REQ
<b>SBN 590: Proseminar in Social and Behavioral</b>	1		Core
PSY 600: <i>M.S. Thesis or Alternative Project defense</i>	2		
<b>Year 3</b>			
<b>SBN 511: Translational Applications of SBN</b>	3	BREADTH	REQ
<b>SBN 506: Seminar in SBN (another dev. section)</b>	3	AREA	REQ
<b>SBN 508: Seminar in SBN Methods</b>	3	BREADTH	REQ
<i>Advancement to Candidacy if not before</i>			
<b>Year 4</b>			
PSY 601: Ph.D. Dissertation	9/sem		
<i>Comprehensive Exam</i>			
<b>Year 5</b>			
PSY 601: Ph.D. Dissertation	9/sem		
<i>Dissertation defense</i>			
Total credits required by program (excluding 600/601)		<b>43</b>	<b>20</b>
Unique credits required by program (does not double count)		<b>25</b>	<b>2</b>
Total course credits completed by student (not including		<b>45</b>	

- *Core* = course required of all students to complete the degree
- *REQ* = credit requirement toward degree, with flexibility in specific course
- AREA=PSY, 15 credit requirement in program area
- BREADTH=PSY, 12 credit breadth requirement